The Last Days of the Romanovs

How Tsar Nicholas II and Russia's Imperial Family Were Murdered

Robert Wilton

INSTITUTE FOR HISTORICAL REVIEW

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Introduction

MARK WEBER

In the night of July 16-17, 1918, Bolshevik secret police murdered Russia's last emperor, Tsar Nicholas II, along with his wife, Tsaritsa Alexandra, their 14-year-old son, Tsarevich Alexei, and their four daughters. They were cut down in a hail of gunfire in a half-cellar room of the house in Ekaterinburg, a city in the Ural mountain region, where they were being held prisoner. The daughters were finished off with bayonets. To prevent a cult for the dead Tsar, the bodies were carted away to the countryside and hastily buried in a secret grave.

Bolshevik authorities at first reported that the Romanov emperor had been shot after the discovery of a plot to liberate him. For many years Soviet historians claimed that local Bolsheviks had acted on their own in carrying out the killings, and that Lenin, founder of the Soviet state, had nothing to do with the crime.

In 1990, Moscow playwright and historian Edvard Radzinsky announced the result of his detailed investigation into the murders. He unearthed the reminiscences of Lenin's bodyguard, Alexei Akimov, who recounted how he personally delivered Lenin's execution order to the telegraph office. The telegram was also signed by Soviet government chief Yakov Sverdlov. Akimov had saved the original telegraph tape as a record of the secret order.[1]

Radzinsky's research confirms what had long been suspected. Leon Trotsky — one of Lenin's closest colleagues — had reported decades earlier that Sverdlov told him in 1918 that Sverdlov and Lenin jointly decided to have the Tsar and his family put to death.[2]

Robert Wilton, correspondent of the London *Times* in Russia for 17 years, here provides one of the most accurate and complete accounts of the murder of Russia's imperial family.[3]

Originally published in 1920, *The Last Days of the Romanovs* has stood the test of time. It has not received the attention it deserves, though, above

all because of the author's candor on the crucially important role played by Jews in the Bolshevik regime, and in the murder of the emperor.

A solid understanding of history is the best guide to comprehending the present and anticipating the future. Accordingly, people are most interested in historical questions during times of crisis, when the future seems most uncertain. With the collapse of Communist rule in the Soviet Union, 1989-1991, and as Russians struggle to build a new order on the ruins of tine old, the subject of this book has once again become very topical.

In recent years, Jews around the world have been voicing anxious concern over the specter of anti-Semitism in the lands of the former Soviet Union. In this new and uncertain era, we are told, suppressed feelings of hatred and rage against Jews are once again being expressed. According to a public opinion survey conducted in 1991, for example, most Soviet citizens wanted all Jews to leave the country.[4] But precisely why is anti-Jewish sentiment so widespread among the peoples of the former Soviet Union? Why do so many Russians, Ukrainians, Lithuanians and others blame "the Jews" for so much misfortune?

Although officially Jews have never made up more than three or four percent of the country's total population, they played a highly disproportionate and probably decisive role in the early Bolshevik regime, effectively dominating tire Soviet government during its early years. With the notable exception of Lenin (Vladimir Ulyanov), most of the leading Communists who took control of Russia in 1917-18 were Jews. Leon Trotsky (Lev Bronstein) headed the Red Army and, for a time, was chief of Soviet foreign affairs. Yakov Sverdlov (Solomon) was both the Bolshevik party's executive secretary and — as chairman of the Central Executive Committee — head of the Soviet government. Grigori Zinoviev (Radomyslsky) headed the Communist International (Comintern), the central agency for spreading revolution in foreign countries. Other prominent Jews included press commissar Karl Radek (Sobelsohn), foreign affairs commissar Maxim Litvinov (Wallach), Lev Kamenev (Rosenfeld) and Moisei Uritsky.[5]

Lenin himself was of mostly Russian and Kalmuck ancestry, but he was also one-quarter Jewish. His maternal grandfather, Israel (Alexander)

Blank, was a Ukrainian Jew who was later baptized into the Russian Orthodox Church.[6]

Two weeks prior to the Bolshevik "October Revolution" of 1917, Lenin convened a top secret meeting in St. Petersburg (Petrograd) at which the key leaders of the Bolshevik party's Central Committee made the fateful decision to seize power in a violent takeover. Of the twelve men who took part in this decisive gathering, there were four Russians (including Lenin), one Georgian (Stalin), one Pole (Dzerzhinsky), and six Jews.[7]

To direct the takeover, a seven-man "Political Bureau" was chosen. It consisted of two Russians (Lenin and Bubnov), one Georgian (Stalin), and four Jews (Trotsky, Sokolnikov, Zinoviev, and Kamenev).[8] Meanwhile, the Petersburg (Petrograd) Soviet—- whose chairman was Trotsky — established an 18-member "Military Revolutionary Committee" to actually carry out the seizure of power. It included eight (or nine) Russians, one Ukrainian, one Pole, one Caucasian, and six Jews.[9] Finally, to supervise the organization of the uprising, the Bolshevik Central Committee established a five-man "Revolutionary Military Center" as the Party's operations command. It consisted of one Russian (Bubnov), one Georgian (Stalin), one Pole (Dzerzhinsky), and two Jews (Sverdlov and Uritsky).[10]

We are unable to vouch for the complete accuracy of the listings of Bolshevik and Soviet officials provided by Wilton in Appendix D. For example, Wilton reports that nine of the 15 members of the Bolshevik Party's Central Committee in 1918 were Jews. By contrast, German scholar Herman Fehst — citing published Soviet records — reports in his useful 1934 study that six of the 15 members were Jewish."

In any case, Wilton's basic point is well taken, as other contemporary observers and historians have noted. Winston Churchill, for example, pointed to the crucial role played by Jews in Bolshevism in an essay published in the February 8, 1920, issue of the London *Illustrated Sunday Herald.*[12] Bolshevism, he warned, is a "worldwide conspiracy for the overthrow of civilization and for the reconstitution of society on the basis of arrested development, of envious malevolence, and impossible equality." The eminent British political leader and historian went on to write:

There is no need to exaggerate the part played in the creation of Bolshevism and in the actual bringing about of the Russian Revolution by these international and for the most part atheistical Jews. It is certainly a very great one; it probably outweighs all others. With the notable exception of Lenin, the majority of the leading figures are Jews.

Moreover, the principal inspiration and driving power comes from the Jewish leaders. Thus Tchitcherin, a pure Russian, is eclipsed by his nominal subordinate, Litvinoff, and the influence of Russians like Bukharin or Lunacharski cannot be compared with the power of Trotsky, or of Zinovieff, the Dictator of the Red Citadel (Petrograd), or of Krassin or Radek — all Jews.

In the Soviet institutions the predominance of Jews is even more astonishing. And the prominent, if not indeed the principal, part in the system of terrorism applied by the Extraordinary Commissions for Combatting Counter-Revolution [the Cheka] has been taken by Jews, and in some notable cases by Jeweses...

Needless to say, the most intense passions of revenge have been excited in the breasts of the Russian people.

David R. Francis, United States ambassador in Russia, warned in a January 1918 dispatch to Washington: "The Bolshevik leaders here, most of whom are Jews and 90 percent of whom are returned exiles, care little for Russia or any other country but are internationalists and they are trying to start a worldwide social revolution."[13]

The Netherlands' ambassador in Russia, Oudendyke, made much the same point a few months later: "Unless Bolshevism is nipped in the bud immediately, it is bound to spread in one form or another over Europe and the whole world as it is organized and worked by Jews who have no nationality, and whose one object is to destroy for their own ends the existing order of things."[14]

"The Bolshevik Revolution," declared a leading American Jewish community paper in 1920, "was largely the product of Jewish thinking, Jewish discontent, Jewish effort to reconstruct."[15]

Summing up the situation at that time, Israeli historian Louis Rapoport writes:[16]

Immediately after the Revolution, many Jews were euphoric over their high representation in the new government. Lenin's first Politburo was dominated by men of Jewish origins...

Under Lenin, Jews became involved in all aspects of the Revolution, including its dirtiest work. Despite the Communists' vows to eradicate anti-Semitism, it spread rapidly after the Revolution — partly because of the prominence of so many Jews in the Soviet administration, as well as in the traumatic, inhuman Sovietization drives that followed. Historian Salo Baron has noted that an immensely disproportionate number of Jews joined the new Bolshevik secret police, the Cheka... And many of those who fell afoul of the Cheka would be shot by Jewish investigators.

The collective leadership that emerged in Lenin's dying days was headed by the Jew Zinoviev, a loquacious, mean- spirited, curly-haired Adonis whose vanity knew no bounds.

As already noted, Jews played a particularly disproportionate role in the Soviet secret police, which began as the *Cheka* (or *Vecheka)* and was later known as the GPU, OGPU, NKVD, MVD and KGB. "Anyone who had the misfortune to fall into the hands of the Cheka," wrote Jewish historian Leonard Schapiro, "stood a very good chance of finding himself confronted with, and possibly shot by, a Jewish investigator."[17] In Ukraine, "Jews made up nearly eighty percent of the rank-and-file Cheka agents," reports W. Bruce Lincoln, an American professor of Russian history.[18]

In light of all this — and as Wilton points out — it should not be surprising that Yakov M. Yurovksy, the leader of the Bolshevik squad that carried out the murder of the Tsar and his family, was Jewish, as was Sverdlov, the Soviet chief who co-signed Lenin's execution order.[19]

Igor Shafarevich, a Russian mathematician of world stature, has sharply criticized the Jewish role in bringing down the Romanov monarchy and establishing Communist rule in his country. Shafarevich was a leading dissident during the final decades of Soviet rule. A prominent human rights activist, he was a founding member of the Committee on the Defense of Human Rights in the USSR.

In *Russophobia,* a book written ten years before the collapse of Communist rule, he noted that Jews were "amazingly" numerous among the personnel of the Bolshevik secret police. The characteristic Jewishness of

the Bolshevik executioners, Shafarevich went on, is most conspicuous in the execution of Nicholas II:[20]

This ritual action symbolized the end of centuries of Russian history, so that it can be compared only to the execution of Charles I in England or Louis XVI in France. It would seem that representatives of an insignificant ethnic minority should keep as far as possible from this painful action, which would reverberate in all history. Yet what names do we meet? The execution was personally overseen by Yakov Yurovsky who shot the Tsar; the president of the local Soviet was Beloborodov (Vaisbart); the person responsible for the general administration in Ekaterinburg was Shaya Goloshchekin. To round out the picture, on the wall of the room where the execution took place was a distich from a poem by Heine (written in German) about King Balthazar, who offended Jehovah and was killed for the offense.

As an expression of its radically anti-nationalist character, the new Soviet government issued a decree a few months after taking power that made anti-Semitism a crime in Russia. The new Communist regime thus became the first in the world to severely punish all expressions of anti-Jewish sentiment.[21] Soviet officials apparently regarded such measures as indispensable. Based on careful observation during a lengthy stay in Russia, the well-informed American-Jewish scholar Frank Golder reported in 1925 that "because so many of the Soviet leaders are Jews... anti-Semitism is gaining [in Russia], particularly in the army [and] among the old and new intelligentsia who are being crowded for positions by the sons of Israel."[22]

The original editions of *The Last Days of the Romanovs* published in New York and London in 1920 also included translations of some of the sworn testimony recorded by Nicholas Sokolov's commission of inquiry, which was set up by Admiral Kolchak after the occupation of western Siberia by the "White" (anti-Communist) forces under his command.

These depositions are admirably summarized here by Robert Wilton. He had good reason for not publishing the complete statements: he feared that some of those named would be victimized by the Bolsheviks. However, when they were subsequently published by someone else, Wilton compared

them with his own copies and declared them to be authentic. The translations of the depositions now available in the West were made from copies of the records that George G. Telberg, professor of law at the University of Saratov and one-time Minister of Justice at Omsk, took from the local archives before he fled with the other ministers of Kolchak's government. These depositions, like very many others in the complete Sokolov Archive, add very little of importance to the story of what actually happened in Ekaterinburg in 1918. With the exception of the statement by Pavel Medvedev (who took part in the murder of Nicholas and his family), they have therefore been omitted from this edition.

Wilton's account reflects the intense anti-German sentiment that had been whipped up during the First World War, and which was still widespread among the English at the time this work was written. It is quite true, as Wilton mentions, that Germany — which was then at war with Russia — did arrange to transport Lenin and other revolutionaries into Russia (on the well-known "sealed train") hoping that they would overthrow Kerensky's anti-German government, or at least weaken its ability to continue fighting.

However, it is not true, as Wilton claims (p. 153), that the Germans approved the murder of the Tsar. Wilton goes on: "The position held by [German ambassador] Mirbach in Moscow, his daily reports from members of the Red Inquisition, which naturally had the closest connection with the arrangement for the murder... are conclusive evidences." This interpretation does not stand up to close scrutiny, and is even contradicted by information provided by Wilton himself. He notes, for example (p. 26), that Count Mirbach was killed a week before the murder of the Tsar by two men who presented themselves as officers of the "Red Inquisition." And as Wilton confirms elsewhere (p. 149): "The Red Tsar [Sverdlov] planned to exterminate the Romanovs, but the Germans proposed to reinstate Nicholas." That is why the Bolsheviks thwarted a German attempt to bring Nicholas back to Moscow from Tobolsk, interrupting his journey and imprisoning him at Ekaterinburg.

With the dramatic collapse of Soviet rule, it is hardly surprising that many Russians are taking a new and more respectful look at their country's pre-Communist history, including the era of the last Romanov emperor. In spite of (or perhaps because of) the relentless official campaign during the

entire Soviet era to suppress every uncritical memory of the Romanovs and imperial Russia, a virtual cult of popular veneration for Nicholas II has been sweeping Russia in recent years.

People have been eagerly paying the equivalent of several hours' wages to purchase portraits of Nicholas from street vendors in Moscow, St. Petersburg and other Russian cities. His portrait now hangs in countless Russian homes and apartments. In late 1990, all 200,000 copies of a first printing of a 30-page pamphlet on the Romanovs quickly sold out. Said one street vendor: "I personally sold four thousand copies in no time at all. It's like a nuclear explosion. People really want to know about their Tsar and his family." Grass roots pro-Tsarist and monarchist organizations have sprung up in many cities.

Ekaterinburg (or Yekaterinburg) was renamed Sverdlovsk by the Soviets in 1924 in honor of the Soviet-Jewish chief. The city's pre-Communist name, which honors Empress Catherine I, was restored in September 1991.[23]

A public opinion poll conducted in 1990 found that three out of four Soviet citizens surveyed regard the killing of the Tsar and his family as a despicable crime.[24] Many Russian Orthodox believers regard Nicholas as a martyr. The independent "Orthodox Church Abroad" canonized the imperial family in 1981, and the Moscow-based Russian Orthodox Church has been under popular pressure to take the same step, in spite of its long-standing reluctance to touch this official taboo. The Russian Orthodox Archbishop of Ekaterinburg announced plans in 1990 to build a grand church at the site of the killings. "The people loved Emperor Nicholas," the Archbishop said. "His memory lives with the people, not as a saint but as someone executed without court verdict, unjustly, as a sufferer for his faith and for orthodoxy."[25]

Why were the Romanovs summarily killed, rather than executed after a show trial? As Wilton explains here (pages 146- 147), Nicholas and his family had to be murdered because the Bolshevik rulers knew that they lacked genuine popular support, and rightly feared that the Russian people would never approve killing of the Tsar, regardless of legalistic formalities and pretexts. The murder of the Tsar and his family is all the more

deplorable because, whatever his failings as a monarch, Nicholas II was, by all accounts, a personally decent and honorable man.

Historian Ivor Benson characterized the killing of the Romanov family as symbolic of the tragic fate of Russia and, indeed, of the entire West, in this century of unprecedented agony and conflict. Harvard University historian Richard Pipes has called the killing a "uniquely odious [deed]... that radically distinguishes it from previous acts of regicide and brands it as a prelude to 20th-century mass murder."

The mass slaughter and chaos of the First World War, and the revolutionary upheavals that swept Europe in 1917-1918, brought an end not only to the ancient Romanov dynasty in Russia, but to an entire continental social order. Swept away as well was the Hohenzollem dynasty in Germany, with its stable constitutional monarchy, and the ancient Habsburg dynasty of Austria-Hungary with its multinational central European empire. Europe's leading states shared not only the same Christian and Western cultural foundations, but most of the continent's reigning monarchs were related by blood. Russia's Tsar Nicholas, Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm, and England's King George were first cousins.

More than was the case with the monarchies of western Europe, Russia's Tsar personally symbolized his land and nation. Thus, the murder of the last emperor of a dynasty that had ruled Russia for three centuries not only symbolically presaged the Communist mass slaughter that would claim so many Russian lives in the decades that followed, but was symbolic of the Communist effort to kill Russia itself.

NOTES

1. E. Radzinksy, The Last Tsar (New York: Doubleday, 1992), pp. 327, 344- 346.; Bill Keller, "Cult of the Last Czar," The New York Times, Nov. 21, 1990.
2. Quoted in: E. Radzinksy, The Last Tsar (New York: Doubleday, 1992), pp. 325-326, and in: Ronald W. Clark, Lenin (New York: 1988), pp. 349- 350.
3. On Wilton and his career in Russia, see: Phillip Knightley, The First Casualty (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), pp. 141-142, 144-146, 151-152, 159, 162, 169.

4. AP dispatch from Moscow, Toronto Star, Sept. 26, 1991, p. A2.; Similarly, a 1992 survey found that one-fourth of people in the republics of Belarus (White Russia) and Uzbekistan favored deporting all Jews to a special Jewish region in Russian Siberia. “Survey Finds Anti-Semitism on Rise in Ex-Soviet Lands," Los Angeles Times, June 12, 1992, p. A4.

5. See individual entries in: H. Shukman, ed., The Blackwell Encyclopedia of the Russian Revolution (Oxford: 1988), and in: G. Wigoder, ed., Dictionary of Jewish Biography (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991).; The prominent Jewish role in Russia's pre-1914 revolutionary underground, and in the early Soviet regime, is likewise confirmed in: Stanley Rothman and S. Robert Lichter, Roots of Radicalism (New York: Oxford, 1982), pp. 92-94.

6. After years of official suppression, this fact was acknowledged in 1991 in the Moscow weekly Ogonyok. See: Jewish Chronicle (London), July 16, I99L; See also: Letter by L. Horwitz in The New York Times, Aug. 5, 1992, which cites information from the Russian journal "Native Land Archives.”; “Lenin’s Lineage? “Jewish,” Claims Moscow News,” Forward (New York City), Feb. 28, 1992, pp. 1, 3.; Jerusalem Post, Jan. 26, 1991.

7. William H. Chamberlin, The Russian Revolution (Princeton Univ. Press. 1987), vol. 1, pp. 291-292.; Herman Fehst, Bolschewisrnus und Judentum: Das jiidische Element in der Fuhrerschaft des Bolschewisrnus (Berlin: 1934), pp. 42-43.; P. N. Pospelov, ed., Vladimir Ilyich Lenin: A Biography (Moscow: Progress, 1966), pp. 318-319.

8. Wm. Chamberlin, The Russian Revolution (1987), vol. 1, pp. 292.

9. Wm. Chamberlin, The Russian Revolution, vol. 1, pp. 274, 299, 302, 306.; Alan Moorehead, The Russian Revolution (New York: 1965), pp. 235, 238, 242, 243, 245.; H. Fehst, Bolschewismus und Judentum (Berlin: 1934), pp. 44, 45.

10. P. N. Pospelov, ed., Vladimir Ilyich Lenin: A Biography (Moscow: Progress, 1966), pp. 319-320.; Dmitri Volkogonov, Stalin: Triumph and Tragedy (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1991), pp. 27-28, 32.

11. Herman Fehst, Bolschewismus und Judentum: Das jiidische Element in der Fiihrerschaft des Bolschewismus (Berlin: 1934), pp. 68-72.

12. Facsimile reprint in: William Grimstad, The Six Million Reconsidered (1979), p. 124.

13. David R. Francis, Russia from the American Embassy (New York: 1921), p. 214.

14. National Archives, Washington, DC. Document published in: Foreign Relations of the United States - 1918 - Russia, Vol. 1 (Washington, DC: 1931), pp. 678-679.

15. American Hebrew (New York), Sept. 1920. Quoted in: Nathan Glazer & Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Beyond the Melting Pot (Cambridge, Mass.: 1963), p. 268.; An article in a 1907 issue of the respected American journal National Geographic reported on the revolutionary situation brewing in Russia in the years before the First World War: "... The revolutionary leaders nearly all belong to the Jewish race, and the most effective revolutionary agency is the Jewish Bund..." (W. E. Curtis, "The Revolution in Russia," The National Geographic Magazine, May 1907, pp. 313-314.)

16. L. Rapoport, Stalin's War Against the Jews (New York: Free Press, 1990), pp. 30, 31, 37. See also pp. 43, 44, 45, 49, 50.

17. Quoted in: Salo Baron, The Russian Jews Under Tsars and Soviets (New York: 1976), pp. 170, 392 (n. 4).

18. The Atlantic, Sept. 1991, p. 14.; Israeli historian Louis Rapoport also confirms the dominant role played by Jews in the Soviet secret police throughout the 1920s and 1930s. L. Rapoport, Stalin's War Against the Jews (New York: 1990), pp. 30-31, 43-45, 49-50.

19. E. Radzinsky, The Last Tsar (1992), pp. 244, 303-304.; Bill Keller, "Cult of the Last Czar," The New York Times, Nov. 21, 1990.; See also: Wm. H. Chamberlin, The Russian Revolution, vol. 2, p. 90.

20. Quoted in: The New Republic, Feb. 5, 1990, pp. 30 ff.; Because of the alleged anti-Semitism of Russophobia, in July 1992 Shafarevich was asked by the National Academy of Sciences (Washington, DC) to resign as an associate member of that prestigious body.

21. C. Jacobson, "Jews in the USSR" in: American Review on the Soviet Union, August 1945, p. 52.; Avtandil Rukhadze, Jews in the USSR: Figures, Facts, Comment (Moscow: Novosti, 1978), pp. 10-11.

22. T. Emmons and B. M. Patenaude, eds., War, Revolution and Peace in Russia: The Passages of Frank Golder, 1913-1927 (Stanford: Hoover Institution, 1992), pp. 320, 139, 317.

23. The pre-Communist names of many other cities were likewise restored in 1991. Above all, the city of Leningrad reverted to its original name of St. Petersburg.

24. The Nation, June 24, 1991, p. 838.

25. Bill Keller, “Cult of the Last Czar,” The New York Times, Nov. 21, 1990.

CHAPTER 1: PROLOGUE

THE true story of the martyrdom of Nicholas II, ex-Tsar of Russia, and of his wife and family can at last be told.

It is based upon evidence obtained by a properly constituted legal investigation. The signed depositions of eye-witnesses are in the writer's possession, but he does not disclose the identity of the deponents who are still in the power of the Soviets—the murderers. The time will come when the guilty will be called to account, but a long while may elapse before the day of retribution dawns. The writer has sought to present the opening for the prosecution, fully confident that the eventual hearing of the evidence before a court of law will substantiate his statement and impose a verdict of ' Guilty.'

At Ekaterinburg, on the night of July 16, 1918, the Imperial Family and their faithful attendants—eleven persons in all— were led into a small room in the house where they had been imprisoned and shot to death with revolvers. There had been no trial of any kind. Before their death the captives were subjected to ill-treatment amounting to horrible torture, mental if not physical. After death the bodies were taken to the woods and completely destroyed. These acts had been premeditated and the murders elaborately prepared.

The actual arrangements for the crime began some weeks before the advent of anti-Bolshevist forces. Neither fear of rescue by the Whites nor plots to release the captives—the existence of which is doubtful—can be reasonably alleged in extenuation of the slaughter.

The official statement issued by the Moscow Government on July 20—four days afterwards—spoke of the shooting of Nicholas as an act of necessity, but categorically affirmed that the ex-Empress and the children had been conveyed out of the city. These deliberately concocted reports of the safe removal of the family were intended to circumvent any investigation—and did so at first.

It is established beyond doubt that the ex-Tsar fell a victim to his loyalty. He had refused offers from the enemies of Russia's allies proposing that he should endorse the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk.

[Cf. Ludendorff's War Memoirs, Vol. II, page 658. ' We could have deposed the Soviet Government, which was thoroughly hostile to us, and given help to other authorities in Russia which

were not working against us, but indeed anxious to co-operate with us. This would have been a success of great importance to the general conduct of the war. If some other Government were established in Russia, it would almost certainly have been possible to come to some compromise with it over the Peace of Brest.']

Attempts to inveigle him into an unholy alliance undoubtedly preceded the murder. All the Romanovs who died violent deaths were, like the Tsar, inconvenient to German as well as to Internationalist plans.

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So many tales have been circulated regarding the fate of the Romanovs, in most cases without the slightest approach to the truth, that I consider myself bound to relate the circumstances which have (1) placed in my possession the complete history and documents of the case ; and (2) imposed upon me a moral obligation to publish the truth to the world.

In March, 1919, returning from Omsk for a short visit to Vladivostok, I met General Diterichs, an old acquaintance, of the Russian Western Armies. After the Revolution he had piloted the Czechs to Siberia and then taken charge of the Uralian Front. By one of the fateful blunders that have marred intervention in behalf of Russia he had been superseded by inferior leaders, and was devoting his energies to the investigation of the *Tsarkoe dels* (Tsar case). Knowing Diterichs, I felt sure that, sooner or later, he would again become commander-in-chief of the armies then fighting the Reds with British and Allied assistance. Personal regard and journalistic considerations equally prompted me to follow his fortunes, good or bad. I have not had cause to regret my decision. General Diterichs was found to be indispensable and recalled to his command, when it was too late. From the first he had seen only too clearly the rocks ahead and warned everybody concerned, and he knew that the fate of Koltchak's attempt to restore Russia was sealed. Yet he accepted the leadership. With equal perspicacity he had also long ago realized the enormous importance of the Tsar case. Thanks to his efforts much was accomplished before the Reds, having recaptured the Urals, could obliterate all traces of the crimes committed there. He continued to follow the case even after his appointment as Commander-in-Chief and after the *debacle.*

On my arrival at Ekaterinburg a month later I met the investigating magistrate who had been specially appointed by the Supreme Ruler (Koltchak) to conduct the inquiry into the Tsar case—Nicholas Alexeievich

Sokolov. He had left his home and family in Penza to avoid service under the Reds, and had managed, after innumerable hardships and hairbreadth escapes, to cross, disguised as a peasant, into Siberia. He walked the last 25 miles foodless, his feet one mass of sores and blisters. An ardent sportsman, he had lost an eye through the carelessness of a comrade. He had made a name for himself in the investigation of famous criminal cases. He was relentless, tireless, full of resource in the pursuit alike of murderers and beasts of prey. The Tsar case called for the exercise of all the skill that the most genial and courageous of magistrates could display. Sokolov never faltered. It is thanks to him that an overwhelming mass of evidence has been built up into a structure that cannot be overthrown—that still continues to grow.

At all the centres of interest for the investigation—Ekaterinburg, Perm, Omsk, in field or forest, amid the disused iron mines which hid so many a gruesome record of Bolshevist ' justice '—I was for many months in constant touch with the course of the inquiry, and personally took part in the search for the remains of the victims. Besides Sokolov and Diterichs only two persons signed the more important *proces-verbaux*— I was one of the two.

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When the fall of Omsk appeared to be imminent, N. A. Sokolov departed eastward, taking with him all the documents, material clues, etc., which by right could be in no other hands save his. I followed later with General Diterichs, after he had resigned his command, in despair over Koltchak's suicidal decision to defer the evacuation of the city—a decision that entailed the loss of countless lives and the death of the Supreme Ruler. We found Sokolov at Chita, persecuted by the myrmidons of the redoubtable Ataman because they personally desired that the Romanovs should be alive for certain obscure purposes of their own, and therefore wished to get rid of Sokolov for proving the contrary. After many vicissitudes and adventures he reached Harbin, whither I had also made my way, and was joined by General Diterichs.

The ultimate fate of the dossier there had to be decided. On all sides were hostile or doubtful organizations. To leave the originals behind and take away only duplicates was, to say the least, risky. Sokolov's life being

in danger he hid the dossier in my car, which had the protection of the British flag. General Lokhvitsky rendered invaluable assistance in bringing about a decision. I must express my feelings of gratitude and personal regard for this very gallant soldier and gentleman, who here in the midst of a veritable Bedlam preserved his unruffled courtesy and calm just as he had done in the turmoil of battle in France and of disaster in Siberia.

With the knowledge and approval of the three distinguished men above mentioned—representing the Russia that was and that we all hope will be again—I took charge of one dossier, it being understood that, given certain contingencies, I should be free at my own discretion to make use of it in whole or in part. The contingencies have arisen, and I am free. But that is not all. I consider the circumstances of to-day render it an imperative duty to let the Allies and the Russians know the truth. Too many hostile interests are served by deliberately concocted lies and legends regarding the fate of the Romanovs. It is time to let the light of day into this tragic and gruesome history.

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When I first came into personal touch with the Tsar case many points were still obscure. I refer to the actual circumstances of the murder itself, not to extraneous aspects—political and international—that were only vaguely hinted at, and that have since attained extraordinary proportions. The confusion then existing was due to two causes : first, to the inexperience of the officials who took charge of the investigation ; secondly, to the activity of Bolshevist agents who remained in the city or were concealed among the ranks of the White Administration.

The official version of the events of July 16-17, given out by the Reds before they fled from Ekaterinburg, was that Nicholas Romanov had been executed ' after trial,' but that the family had been removed to ' a safe place.' This legend became engrafted upon the minds of a great many people, and still continues to exercise its luring appeal. Every sympathizer with the Soviets considered himself or herself bound to foster this version, since no Russian, however hostile to the ex-Sovereigns, could find the slightest excuse or pretext for ' executing ' a whole family of five children who had never taken, or been able to take, the slightest part in politics. The Russians who still belonged to the German ' orientation ' were also—curiously enough—disposed to credit any tale of a miraculous escape. They

seemed to think that a restoration of the Monarchy—which formed the basis of their political creed—would be furthered by the ' miracle ’ theory. Some of them had more practical aims, as will be shown later on.

N. A. Sokolov was not deceived for an instant. If, supposing, the family had been removed, their death was, to him, none the less a moral certainty. He had precise information that every other Romanov within Sovietdom had been murdered, although they were just as unconcerned in politics as the boy Alexis and his sisters. But the evidence of eye-witnesses, coupled with and corroborated by countless material proofs, could leave no doubt as to the fact of a wholesale murder at Ekaterinburg. All the efforts of the organizers and the supineness of the earlier investigators could not completely tangle the threads. But it became a harder task to assemble the evidence that would secure a conviction in a court of law.

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I visited the house where the victims had lived. It belonged to a certain Ipatiev, a merchant who held the rank of captain in the Engineers. By one of the ironies of Fate he bore the name of the monastery whence the first Romanov sallied to assume the Crown of All the Russias. The Ipatiev of Ekaterinburg was, however, of Jewish origin.

The Engineer Department of the Siberian Army was installed in the upper storey. Directly after the occupation of the city by the Czechs, General Gaida had forcibly taken possession of the premises, despite the vehement protest of the judicial authorities, alarmed by the risk of losing possible clues. The rooms underwent extensive alterations. This was, of course, a flagrant violation of the most elementary principles of criminal investigation.

The lower floor was tenanted by Ipatiev himself, on the understanding that no strangers should be admitted. The small basement room—the scene of the murders—was sealed up. I saw it a few days later. Sokolov took me over the premises, explaining step by step the enactment of the tragedy. We stood in the little room, noted the trace of the bullets, the direction of the bayonet thrusts, and the splashes of blood on the walls. The room had been a shambles, and all the washing and scouring that, according to the evidence, had followed the murders could not remove tell-tale signs. We knew from the depositions of witnesses and the mute, gruesome language of the death-chamber where each of the victims sat or stood when the

assassins fired their revolvers. The bullet-holes in the walls and in the floor had been carefully cut out ; human blood had been found in the wood and on the bullets.

Obscene drawings and inscriptions covered the upper walls. Obviously they were the work of uncultured peasants. Their character showed only too clearly how deeply the conscience of the people had been revolted by the Rasputin scandal. There were other inscriptions—in Hebrew, in German, in Magyar. Regarding them I was to learn much at a later date.

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Soon afterwards I was in the woods, io miles north of the city, where the peasants had found jewellery and other relics of the murdered family. I saw the tracks, still clear, of heavy lorries crashing through the trees to a group of disused iron- ore shafts. All went in one direction, ceasing near a pit round which a vast collection of clues had been discovered ; precious stones, pearls, beautiful settings of gold and platinum, some hacked, broken, bearing traces of fire ; metal buckles, hooks, buttons, corset-frames, pieces of charred leather and cloth, a human finger intact, a set of false teeth. The character, condition, and numbers of these various articles were in themselves sufficient to indicate the sex and ages of the victims and the manner in which their bodies had been disposed of.

First on the scene had been the peasants. For three days and nights they were cut off from the city by a cordon of Red Guards placed around the wood. Knowing that the Whites were at hand, they thought the Reds were burying arms. Vague rumours had reached them of the death of Nicholas II. As soon as the cordon had been removed they rushed to the spot. Woodcraft and native astuteness quickly opened their eyes. ' It is the Tsar that they have been burning here,' they declared. On this very spot, a year later, I found topaz beads, such as the young Princesses wore, and other gems, by scratching the surface of the hardened clay surrounding the iron pit.

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Led off on a false scent, the earlier investigator had neglected the unerring sagacity of the peasants and had even failed to make an immediate examination of the wood and pits —perhaps afraid to leave the city, because Red bands were reported to be in the neighbourhood. He was following the

red-herring trailed by Soviet agents that, to wit, the family had escaped or been removed. These agents did not know the truth themselves. They merely related what they had been instructed to say. The local Soviet had not known the facts. There had been no trial. The murders had been the work of a separate organization which directed everything from a distance. Misled by the versions thus spread, the investigator had lost himself in the maze of conflicting rumour in Ekaterinburg.

When Sokolov took over the case—in the early months of 1919—it was almost at a standstill because of the initial mistakes and incapacity of the investigator. Yet evidence had come from another quarter that should have compelled him to take the right course. From one of the Imperial servants who had escaped from a Red shooting squad it became known that several grand dukes and the Grand Duchess Elizabeth had been murdered immediately after the Ekaterinburg shooting, and that some of the bodies had been found in disused iron-pits. In no case had there been any semblance of a trial. It was evident the wholesale extermination of the Romanovs had been pursued, and that all theories of the miraculous survival of the children should be abandoned.

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On July 14, 1919, the Bolshevists entered Ekaterinburg, and since then have been in occupation of the Urals. They were able to satisfy themselves that, in spite of all their efforts to mislead justice, the truth about the murder of the ex-Tsar and his family would become known and arouse popular indignation. They then decided to take a course that was quite in keeping with their methods of government, although it may appear to be almost incredible to us, with our notions of truth and justice—to stage a ' fake ' trial of pretended ' murderers ' in order to divert the odium of the crime to other shoulders.

Brazenly ignoring the fact that they themselves had officially ' sentenced ' the Tsar in July, 1918, and recorded his death at the hands of the Soviet at Ekaterinburg, they announce a trial of the ' murderers ' of the Tsar in September, 1919. Twenty-eight ' accused,' we read, were charged with murdering ' the Tsar and the whole family ' in order ' to throw the discredit of the murder upon the Bolshevists,' and some were actually sentenced to death and ' executed.' The Bolshevist organ *Pravda* records this judicial

farce, which may or may not have been actually ‘ performed.' I shall have occasion to deal with it in its appointed place.

CHAPTER 2: THE STAGE AND THE ACTORS

SOME idea of the crime of Ekaterinburg is now in the reader's possession; but, in dealing with the evidence in all its aspects, it is necessary to give an account of conditions that prevailed in the country then, and of the chief actors in the drama. The murder of the Tsar and his family, even after his abdication, may not be regarded as a simple act of vengeance or casual precaution.

In 1917, the Germans had sent Lenin with a horde of Jewish revolutionaries to take possession of Russia. A Red Government, composed of persons selected in Berlin, was now in power ; but they were vassals. Count Mirbach, representing the suzerain State, figured in Moscow as the virtual ruler, before whom the apostles of Karl Marx bowed the knee. At the period under review, the Reds had displayed no overt disposition to throw off the German yoke. They conformed with all the humiliating clauses of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, dutifully sending the tribute gold to Berlin which had been demanded as ' war indemnity,' plundering the national Exchequer and resources by order of their German masters. Apparently everything was going well with the German plan of ' peaceful ' conquest, whatever secret hopes the Red leaders may have nurtured. Instead of a redoubtable foe, Russia was now a willing handmaid.

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Ludendorff has related frankly, disingenuously, how simple and wonderful had been this operation.

[1 Ludendorff. War Memories.

Vol. II, page 509.

' From October, 1917, onwards, Bolshevism in Russia obtained an ever firmer hold.

' I could not doubt that the disintegration of the Russian Army and nation involved an extraordinary risk for Germany and Austria- Hungary. All the greater was my anxiety when I thought of the weakness of our Government and theirs.

' By sending Lenin to Russia our Government had, moreover, assumed a great responsibility. From a military point of view his journey was justified, for Russia had to be laid low. But our Government should have seen to it that we also were not involved in her fall.'

Vol. II, page 654.

' In Russia events had developed along lines of their own, illustrative of the lying propensities of the Soviet Government. With the consent of this Government the Entente had formed Czecho-Slovak units out of Austro-Hungarian prisoners. These were intended to be used against us, and were therefore to be conveyed to France by the Siberian railway. All this was sanctioned by a Government

with whom we were at peace, and we actually took it lying down I At the beginning of June, I wrote to the Imperial Chancellor specially on the subject, and pointed out the dangers which threatened us from the Soviet Government.'

Vol. II, page 656.

' I had got into touch with him (General Krasnov) in order to prevent his joining the Entente. The situation was complicated by the fact that I could not put difficulties in the way of the home Government's pro-Bolshevik policy, of which, of course, I was informed, and Krasnov regarded the Soviet Government, and not the Entente, as his enemy.']

Not only was Russia out of the war ; the foodstuffs obtained from the Ukraine had literally saved Germany and her allies. Hetman Skoropadsky already ruled the Ukraine for Germany. Krasnov, at the head of the Cossacks, and Alexeiev with the gallant Volunteer army remained neutral. Ludendorff hoped to lure them into his net—a radiant combination that assured dominion over Russia and her vast resources. He explains why it was not realized. The German Government was to blame, it appears. There was a divergence of views between Berlin and G.H.Q. The latter considered that the Reds had ' done their work ' ; so the Reds ' must go,' and Krasnov and Alexeiev be diverted at once from their sympathies with the Entente in order to preclude any possibility of a revival of the Eastern front. For this purpose it was necessary to order the German divisions in the south of Russia to march on Moscow. Ludendorff felt quite sure that even Alexeiev would not be able to resist the temptation to join hands with the enemies of Sovietdom. But the obstinate, slow-witted bureaucrats in Berlin could not adapt themselves to these lightning changes. Ludendorff stormed at them : Were they blind not to see that the Reds were hoodwinking them ? Did they want proofs ? Were the Czech prisoners of war not proceeding eastward with the avowed object of reinforcing the French army ?

This concrete accusation could not be denied. Lenin's organization had promised Professor Masaryk to permit the Czecho-Slovaks to leave the country by way of Siberia provided they went peacefully. It was an easy riddance of possible enemies. The Czechs were proceeding quietly to Vladivostok, carefully abstaining from violence even when sorely tried by the impudence of local Soviets, giving up their arms to bribe the Reds.

Mirbach received instructions to call his Red henchmen to account; at the same time messages were conveyed from the two Kaisers to their warriors imprisoned in Siberia, enjoining upon them the duty of organizing resistance to the ' invaders.' How the German and Magyar officers enrolled Russian convicts and flung themselves athwart the Czech retreat with the

energetic concurrence of the Soviets is a matter of history. But the connexion between this circumstance and all that preceded and followed is less known. Ludendorff feared above all the re-establishment of the Eastern front, yet it was Ludendorff and his Government that brought about the very consequences that they least wanted.

Had the Czechs been allowed to depart it is certain that there would have been no military help from the Entente side, and the chances of seducing the Russian anti-Bolshevist leaders might not have been still-born. As it was, the whole edifice of guile, duplicity, and deceit, raised with such labour and cost, fell to the ground. The murder of Mirbach sounded the call of its collapse.

But at the time when the fate of the Tsar and his family hung in the balance, Germany was absolute mistress of the situation, and, had there been unity of method as well as of purpose between the German High Command and Berlin, the fate of Russia and, perhaps, of the war would have been changed. Berlin wanted to continue to rule Russia through the Soviets under Mirbach ; Ludendorff aimed at the overthrow of the Soviets in order to enlist the support of the Cossacks and Volunteers. As might be expected, the conflict between them resulted in a fatal compromise—an attempt to run with the White hare and hunt with the Red hounds.

Ludendorff's plan was to substitute a more agreeable form of government in the place of the Soviets and to modify suitably the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. Here we have the key to the removal of Nicholas II from Tobolsk. But all that subsequently happened was conditional upon another set of forces. Sovietdom asserted itself. The working and organization of the Soviets fitted in admirably with German requirements, and incidentally subserved the plans of the murderers. New names, devised to appeal to the fancy of the mob, concealed familiar institutions.

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There were three principal bodies—Sovnarkom, Tsik, and Chrezvychaika, these names being abbreviations of *Soviet narodnykh komisarov* (Council of People's Commissaries), *Tsentralny ispolnitelny komitet* (Central Executive Committee), and *Chrezvychainaia komisia dlia borby z kontrrevoliutsiei* (Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-revolution). Under the old *regime* the Duma, the Council of Ministers, and the Okhrana had occupied the same relative positions.

Instead of the former ranks and dignities there were *komisary,* all supposed to be elected, but in reality appointed by an inner and occult body. *Sovdeps* (Councils of Deputies) and *Komit- ety bednoty* (Poor Commissions) took over the functions of the old zemstvos and municipalities, grouped into regional communes, just as it had been proposed to group the zemstvos according to separate *oblasti* (regions). Sovietdom (in Russian *Sovdepia)* had invented no new forms. It is still in the grip of the Red Okhrana, or Inquisition.

As there was no apparent authority, the local bodies often acted independently ; indeed, Lenin encouraged this tendency. *Vlast net mestakh* (every place its own master) was his motto. Lenin did not rule ; the Soviet system was governed by other people, the fellow-passengers who came with him under German auspices. He delivered impassioned harangues before the Sovnarkom and received deputations from minor Soviets, the real power was elsewhere—in the Tsik and Chrezvychaika ; and, just as it had been in the old Russia, the last word was always with the Police-Okhrana organization.

Mirbach received his daily report from the Chrezvychaika. He was murdered by two men who said they came from that office. Lenin had as much to do with his death as he had with the murders, a week later, of the ex-Tsar and his family. The Red Okhrana and the inner circle of the Tsik were the veritable authors of the crime of Ekaterinburg, and probably of Mirbach's assassination.

[In The Times of July 8, 1918, appeared a wireless from the Moscow Government, issued on the previous night. It is signed ' Lenin ' and addressed to ' Joffe ' (the Soviet representative), 'Berlin' :—

' Today (i.e., July 7, 1918) at 2 o'clock two unknown men, with false {sic) documents from the Extraordinary Commission (Tsik) appeared at the German Embassy and threw a bomb into the apartment of Count Mirbach. Count Mirbach was seriously wounded and died.

'The representatives of the Russian Government paid a visit immediately to the German Embassy and expressed their indignation at this act of political provocation. The Government is taking all necessary steps to discover the murderers and to hand them over to an Extraordinary Tribunal. Steps were taken to strengthen the guard of the German Embassy and to protect German citizens. . . .

'An extraordinary plenipotentiary will be dispatched to Berlin with the mission of expressing to the German Government our indignation against the criminal act and our sympathy with the German representative who fell a victim to this crime. . . .']

Nonentities, figureheads of the Sovnarkom, do not interest us. We are concerned with great, if maleficent, personages in the Red world. Most of them are still unknown outside the ranks of professional revolutionaries. A goodly proportion of the hundred Jews who came out of Germany with

Lenin, and the hundreds who came from Chicago, deserve to be included in this gallery, for they undoubtedly held Russia under their sway. To enumerate and describe them would require a small volume. I need sketch only those who act prominently in the drama of Ekaterinburg. The most important were : Sverdlov, Safarov, Voikov and Goloshchekin, and the murderer in-chief, Yurovsky. Others will be introduced later on.

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The names of Safarov and Voikov figure in the list of Lenin's fellow-passengers. Both are very powerful Bolshevists, holding high places in the executive and police branches. Sverdlov was the uncrowned Tsar of the Soviets. His authority was for more than a year really higher than that of Lenin or even Trotzky. He dominated the Tsik, and his creatures ruled the Chrezvychaika. Sverdlov's name appears in the Bolshevist Government as approved by Germany (Sverdlov was—and long remained—a paid agent of Germany). The direct connexion between Sverdlov and the murders of Ekaterinburg is established beyond doubt.

Goloshchekin was the representative of the above-named conclave in the Regional Soviet of the Urals and kept that rather recalcitrant body under secret subjection to his chiefs. The Ufalian Reds were particularly self-willed and jealous of Moscow because the population consisted almost entirely of miners and metal-workers—a very advanced and independent class, having little in common with the peasant-farmer, for whom they professed contempt. Goloshchekin did whatever Sverdlov wished. A stratagem had given him absolute power. The president of the Regional Soviet was a Russian named Beloborodov. He was arrested by the Chrezvychaika and imprisoned on a charge of appropriating 30,000 roubles. The punishment would be death. Together with Safarov and Voikov, Goloshchekin arranged to release him. Beloborodov resumed the presidency of the Regional Soviet as if nothing had happened. Dishonesty was so rampant among the Komisars that the transition surprised no one. But after that, Beloborodov gave up all attempts to resist Moscow—if he had ever done so. He was henceforth a mere man of straw, kept in his place to deceive the obstreperous Uralian miners, who did not wish to be ruled from Moscow, much less by Jews.

The closest personal bonds had existed for many years between Goloshchekin and Sverdlov. They had been together in prison and exile.

Goloshchekin ranked as an internationalist of the most pronounced type. He had been selected for the rulership of the Urals with an eye to other than political activities. He was bloodthirsty in an abnormal degree, even for a Red chieftain. People who knew him at Ekaterinburg describe Goloshchekin as a homicidal sadist. He never attended executions, but insisted upon hearing a detailed account of them. He huddled in bed shivering and quaking till the executioner came with his report, and would listen to his description of tortures with a frenzy of joy, begging for further details, gloating over the expressions, gestures and death- throes of the victims as they passed before his diseased vision.

Yurovsky had a humbler task ; he was not one of the mighty ones of the Soviet. When the German plan to restore Nicholas as a vassal sovereign had failed, and the Jewish conclave in Moscow was free to carry out its vengeful purpose, Yurovsky was installed as chief jailer and tormentor of the doomed family. The Russian commandant and guards were dismissed, ostensibly because they were pilfering. Magyarized-German soldiers under a Jewish commandant took their places and were able to rob wholesale the unfortunates whom they were supposed to protect.

The origins of Yurovsky have been fully investigated. His parents and relatives—all poor Jews—remained in Siberia after the murderer and his chiefs and accomplices had fled from Ekaterinburg. He had been a watchmaker at Tomsk, scarcely able to make ends meet. Naturally ambitious, he despised the people around him. He was waiting for an opportunity. It came suddenly and mysteriously. Yurovsky disappeared. This was before the war. He is next heard of in Ekaterinburg as a photographic dealer. It leaked out that he had been to Berlin and become possessed of some capital. When war came, he evaded service in the trenches by qualifying as a red-cross assistant *(feldsher)* and remained in Ekaterinburg. When the Bolshevists seized the government, Yurovsky became one of the local agents of the new power.

At a time when he was seeking any and every means of advancement, Yurovsky had been baptized into the Lutheran Church. He used to attend prayers in Ipatiev’s house. He even chatted pleasantly with the sick boy Alexis, whom, a few days later, he shot with his own hand.

CHAPTER 3: NO ESCAPE : ALEXANDRA MISJUDGED

APART from the bald assertions of parties interested in spreading false reports, there is no evidence of any attempt on the part of the Romanovs to escape from any of their prisons. All the compromising ' documents ' produced by Soviet apologists on this subject are transparent fabrications. Loyal Russians wished to save the Tsar from the Soviets, knowing full well the danger of treachery that he incurred, and there were several organizations, working independently, but none ever began putting a plan into execution.

During the captivity at Tobolsk some money reached the family secretly. It helped the prisoners to eke out the starvation allowance ordained by the Soviets. Attempts to render further aid were frustrated by a German-Bolshevist agent stationed at Tiumen. This person, a Russian officer who had married a daughter of Rasputin, ingratiated himself with doubtful travellers for Tobolsk and betrayed them to the Soviet. The Germans had thus taken elaborate precautions not to allow the ex-Tsar to slip out unawares. Perhaps they thought that the Allies of Russia might try to rescue him! At Ekaterinburg nothing could be done. The Reds claim to have intercepted some letters between the captives and conspirators. But it may be pointed out that not a single person was arrested there for conspiracy to help the exiles. Remembering the lavish repressions ever applied by the occult powers of the Chrezvychaika, it will be conceded that they would have missed no opportunity to exert them in such a cause. The British Consul (Mr. Preston), remaining gallantly at his post throughout the Red terror, and rendering incalculable service to the victims of Bolshevist oppression, was unable to do anything to alleviate the sufferings and torture of the Romanovs. Yet, strange to relate, a monarchist organization had its agents in the city. It even succeeded in conveying some food and comforts through the nuns of the local monastery. Beyond that it was unable to go.

There is no evidence to show that at any time during the captivity was any active attempt made to rescue the Romanovs. This applies equally to the ex-Sovereigns and to their kinsmen. At Tobolsk, Ekaterinburg, Perm, and Alapaievsk the pretext for wholesale murder was always the same ; an alleged attempt to escape or rescue. And from the testimony of persons who were in daily intercourse with the imprisoned family, it is clear that, had any

serious efforts to procure their escape been made, they would have met with no encouragement. Nicholas II repeatedly said that he would not leave Russia ; Alexandra hated above everything the idea of going to Germany. At that time Russia offered no sure place of refuge.

The Rasputin propaganda had poisoned the minds of the people, but not all the people. In the villages, among the old folk, feelings of loyalty still held sway, ready at the first signal to assert themselves openly. The volumes of evidence in my possession prove this statement. Many of the witnesses were peasants who, consciously, willingly risked their lives in order that the truth about the fate of the Tsar should be established. Who knows how many of these simple souls have been martyred for their boldness ?

Among the obscenities that disfigured the walls of the patiev house, one inscription struck a loyal note. In uncouth peasant writing and spelling the author-evidently one of the guards—asked how long were the people going to put up with the Komisars, and urged the Tsar to come forward and drive away the horde of usurpers that were ruining the country !

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I cannot help thinking that the Rasputin legend did not suffice to kill the people's faith in the Tsar. It certainly discredited Alexandra, and he shared her disgrace ; but that was not enough to account for the virulence of popular clamour against Nicholas II. His fate would not have been so much a matter of indifference to the multitude had the vile story of Rasputin not been preceded by blunders that deeply incensed the popular conscience. I recall the dreadful murder of women and children before the Winter Palace on Bloody Sunday. That crime was prepared by the Okhrana and attributed to the Tsar. It seems to me that had it not been for that hideous slaughter of innocents no one would have ever dared to raise a hand against the Tsar and his children. I wish to be quite fair to the Russians, without in any way extenuating the heinousness of the crime of Ekaterinburg.

The ex-Empress was the object of special hatred. She completely dominated her spouse in the imagination of the people, and occupies a place apart in the evidence. Many new facts have been brought to light substantially modifying the current estimate of her life and character. Several trunks full of papers and effects belonging to his victims were taken by Yurovsky to Moscow after the murder. Sverdlov then announced that all would be published, so that the people should see what manner of persons

had ruled them. That promise has not been kept, and for a good reason : the diaries and correspondence of Nicholas and Alexandra contained no hint of treachery. They proved two things—unbounded loyalty to Russia and to the Allies ; and, alas ! complete subserviency of Nicholas to his wife, But neither of these matters interested the Soviet leaders, and most of these priceless documents have been suppressed in Moscow. Many others were overlooked or forgotten in Ekaterinburg, and figure in the dossier of the Tsar case. Among them is a collection of Alexandra's letters to her maid-of-honour. There are also the depositions of servitors and members of the household.

Analysing this mass of first-hand evidence, one obtains a true picture of Alexandra. Proud, domineering, self-restrained, gifted, mystical she had been from youth. Her troubles, mental and physical, had distorted these characteristics. Nicholas fell in love with her when she was 15, and waited patiently for her eight years. Even as a girl she dominated him. After their marriage there was never any doubt who was master. Her dominion was not even challenged. Nicholas never acted without his wife's approval, except when he was separated from her—for instance, when he signed the writ of abdication. These were not the best qualifications for Tsardom at a time of transition. Alexandra could not attain popularity, nor would she admit the necessity of it for herself or the Tsar. Indeed, as the years passed she became less and less responsive to the demands and requirements of public opinion, which cannot be defied with impunity even by an autocrat.

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Many Russians attributed these failings to the Hesse disease *(bolezn Gessenskikh),* the hereditary taint that had carried off many of Alexandra's relations.

[Haemophilia, the disease from which the Tsarevich suffered, is as a general rule transmitted through the females to the males. The females do not suffer from it till late in life.]

The fact that her only son suffered from and might at any moment die of it only made her own trouble worse. The disease is dangerous to boys and adult women ; girls do not feel its effects till they are grown up, whereas boys become immune after reaching manhood. In the case of women it is apt to prey on the mind, aggravating and intensifying any morbid predisposition. Hysteria in its worst forms is an almost invariable

accompaniment. She also suffered intensely from heart trouble. Her life must have been one long agony.

Alexandra was not normal. Her belief in Rasputin indicated as much. The evidence of Dr. Botkin is explicit. People who suffer from hysteria in an acute congenital form repel and estrange all persons that do not blindly accept their domination. Rasputin had to be treated as a saint because Alexandra imagined him to be one. The Court of Russia became peopled with time-servers and nonentities.

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I shall deal with Rasputin presently. The new materials in my possession show that he was simply a peasant afflicted with a pathological condition. The legend that has grown up regarding his occult powers can be traced not to Rasputin but to his ' friends.' He was a mere tool. Alexandra wanted him —to cure her son ; others used him for personal or political intrigues because Alexandra, the veritable Autocrat of All the Russias, had need of him. In the tragedy of the Romanovs every thread leads us to this Woman of Destiny.

The very exhaustive records of their life before and after the Revolution give a true presentation of the family, such as no individual could furnish even if he or she had been in the closest intimacy with Nicholas or Alexandra. One is struck by the almost superhuman secretiveness of the ex-Sovereigns. They did not trust anyone completely. Most of the persons who were supposed to be particularly attached to them knew little or nothing of their inner life and thoughts. This explains, perhaps, why so few decided to follow them into exile. Only between themselves does there appear to have been no reserve.

Alexandra's personality is reflected in her family—Nicholas, like herself, an embodiment of all the domestic virtues, religious to the verge of mysticism, expert in dissimulation, never showing anger, perhaps never really feeling angry ; incapable of a decision—so utterly had he surrendered himself to his wife ; the daughters relegated to the background entirely unprepared to take their proper place in the world ; Alexis monopolizing all the care and attention of his mother ; the children ashamed of her belief in Rasputin, yet not daring openly to resent it.

Among the Court favourites, male or female, nobody exercised any real influence except in so far as it suited the Empress. Only one person appears

to have been admitted for any length of time to the Imperial confidence. That person was Anna Vyrubova. Regarding her, Rasputin used to speak in the crudest terms to the companions of his tavern-revels, who, of course, repeated his drunken boasts. That was the origin of her infamous notoriety. She herself could not have devised a surer way of retaining Alexandra's favour. The detractors of Vyrubova had also dared to retail the foulest stories about Alexandra, alleging the same source. Alexandra rightly considered herself a victim of slander, and naturally included Anna under the same designation.

The fact is, Anna Vyrubova was Rasputin's accomplice— nothing more. She kept him in touch with everything, especially with the boy's health. It was at her house that Rasputin saw the Emperor and Empress when it became too scandalous for him to appear daily in the Palace—after the dismissal of governesses who had raised an outcry against Rasputin’s familiarities with their charges.

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Another person deserves mention. It is not positively shown how far his influence was felt, but certainly he played an important part in the Romanov tragedy. He was in many ways a mystery man—a doctor of Tibetan medicine, by birth a Buriat, named Badmaiev. Besides dispensing nostrums that cured all ills.—often bringing relief where modern science had failed—he dabbled in politics, and who knows what dark forces were served by him ? Rasputin was one of his best clients. According to Rasputin one could immediately regain all the vigour of youth by swallowing a powder composed of Tibetan herbs; another kind of powder made one quite indifferent to worry. Badmaiev reserved these specifics for people whom he could trust. The first-named kind was for Rasputin, but who was the recipient of the ' dope ’ that ' made you forget ’—who if not the hapless Nicholas ? And once it is admissible that the peasant had taken to drugs for specific purposes, one may seriously entertain other accusations against him and his accomplices.

According to indications contained in the evidence, Anna Vyrubova arranged the ‘ miracles ’ of healing that Rasputin performed on the sick boy. It was not difficult. The malady always followed the same course. A slight bruise set up internal hemorrhage. The patient suffered terrible pain while the blood flowed, clotted, and finally began to be resorbed. Anna knew

from experience how to read the symptoms. Rasputin would come to pray when the crisis was over, so that it should seem as if his intercession had brought relief. Things happened in this way on several known occasions. Rasputin did not wish to lose the Empress's favour. He and Vyrubova took their precautions. And Badmaiev's powders may here also have been used with benefit to all concerned. Alexandra's eyes were never opened to the fact that Rasputin's prayers did not affect the disease.

It will be argued by those who knew Vyrubova that she was too garrulous to keep a secret, too child-like to conceive or carry out any intrigue, and still less any act affecting the Empress in whose hands she was as wax. To have lived for twenty years in the confidence of such a woman as the Empress presumes the possession of no ordinary faculties, whether of extreme innocence combined with serpent wisdom or of profound guile hidden under an appearance of candour. Vyrubova's apologists would have us believe that she was nothing better than an idiot. The skill with which she crept into the good graces of the Imperial Family, ably seconding all the moves of the practised courtier Taneiev, her father, shows the absurdity of such a theory and sufficiently denotes her real disposition.

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Woman-like, the Empress regarded all things from a personal standpoint. Her malady only served to intensify her likes and dislikes. One of her particular aversions was Wilhelm of Prussia, first because the Hohenzollerns had been exalted at the expense of her own House ; secondly because Wilhelm had not counted with her. Germany, ruled by Wilhelm, was ever the foe of Russia ruled by Alexandra. She could not admit the possibility of a compromise or truce with Wilhelm's Germany, any more than she would permit the Tsar to summon a Ministry composed of Rasputin's detractors and enemies. A complete and ludicrous misapprehension prevailed in Russia and among the Allied peoples about the alleged pro-German tendencies of the ex-Empress. She hated Germany with a bitterness and a fervour equalled only by her contempt and loathing for the Russians—always excepting the peasants, whom she ' imagined ' to be endowed with all the virtues and qualities that Rasputin was supposed to possess.

Wilhelm was described by her as ' that low comedian ' and ' man of falsehood,' who had ' stooped to associate himself with Bolshevists.' With

fierce and joyful anticipation, she foresaw his punishment : ' The day will come when they will destroy him I ' She did not live to see her vision fulfilled.

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Such was the so-called pro-German Empress. It is easy to recall the outcry that was raised in Entente countries in the spring of 1917 when it became known that the Romanovs would be permitted to come to England. ‘ How can we tolerate this friend of Germany in our midst ? ’ The public had been so deeply affected by the Rasputin propaganda, that they would not hear of Alexandra coming to this country. And as the family could not be disunited, they had all to remain in Russia. The ex-Tsar’s servants had even prepared his English uniforms. Sorrowfully, without understanding the reason, they obeyed the order to pack them away. Thus, after depriving them of the throne, Rasputin’s foul influence took from the Romanovs their hope of an asylum and left them to suffer a shameful death.

CHAPTER 4: RASPUTIN THE PEASANT

THE walls of Ipatiev's house epitomized the Revolution. One name and one effigy predominated : the name of Grishka, the silhouette of Rasputin, lasciviously caricatured. One met, here and there, allusions to the 'Tsar-bloodsucker' and other catch-phrases of the Revolution, but one felt that they were perfunctory. The one and only unpardonable, crime in the eyes of the Red guards had been the preference shown by the Empress for a peasant —a common man like one of themselves. What a commentary on the blindness of the unfortunate Alexandra !

Political propaganda had represented Rasputin as a monster of iniquity and occult powers, whereby he held the Empress under his thralldom. The dossier kills this legend—it is nothing more.

Gregory Rasputin was forty-five at the time of his death (1916). Till the age of thirty-four he had lived as an ordinary peasant in his native village of Pokrovskoe, between Tobolsk and Tinmen. He had a wife and three children, a comfortable home, and enough land to feed himself and family. Griskha —to use the familiar diminutive of his Christian name, as is customary in the villages—was a fair type of the Siberian peasant-farmer. They arc endowed with an abundance of mother-wit, wield the vernacular with consummate skill, and are fine, upstanding fellows, able to do a day's work or celebrate a festival equally well. Such was Gregory Rasputin. Nothing indicated a future for him different from the rest. He might be expected to plough, drink vodka, beat his wife, trick his neighbours, and pray before the Holy Ikons in the usual sequence till he died.

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One day he heard the Voice. It happened to peasants now and then in youth, sometimes in the prime of life, and often in their old age. After that they left their mundane affairs and prepared themselves for Eternity. Grishka had been ' called ' when he was fourteen, and in an ecstasy had tried to mutilate himself. But he had fallen from grace. Now, twenty years later, the call came again. Grishka was ' converted ' by Dmitri Pecherkin, a *strannik* (wanderer), who had deserted his home in the same province of Tobolsk to pray at the Holy Places. In 1905 Rasputin turned over his farm to his wife, son, and daughters, and joined Dmitri in his wanderings.

Together they visited Mount Athos, Jerusalem, Kiev, Moscow and Petrograd.

I have a copy of his work, *My Thoughts and Reflections* (published in Petrograd, 1915), describing his pilgrimages. It is an assortment of stereotyped phrases, texts from Scripture, homely proverbs—just the conversation of an ordinary *strannik.* One is struck with wonderment that the ‘ author ’ of such utter commonplace should have influenced the destinies of a vast Empire, or could for one moment impose upon the cultured intellect of an Empress.

I believe that Rasputin was quite sincere in following Pecherkin, and that during his earlier days in the capital he was still an earnest devotee. Bishop Feofan met him in Petrograd, and was impressed by his sincerity. But even at this time (about 1907) he was already inclining once more towards worldly things. Pecherkin tried in vain to persuade him to take the vows and join him in a monastery. Rasputin had a fancy for the drawing-rooms of the great city, where he was petted and paraded by hostesses in search of a sensation. And thus it came to pass that, with the help of Feofan and the Grand Duchesses Militza and Anastasia (the Montenegrin Princesses who had already introduced various ' saints' to the mystically disposed sovereigns), Rasputin came to the Court.

The diaries and depositions of his daughter Matrena form part of the dossier. Amidst a mass of verbiage one is able to discover here and there precise landmarks of the Rasputin history. One sees the ' saint ’ gradually drawn into the multiple cog-wheels of Court intrigue ; bound firmly to the family chariot, as his daughters are put to fashionable schools ; having to make money for the girls ; obliged to remain a peasant in garb and language to please his protectress. But a peasant who is divorced from his normal occupation and has disobeyed the Voice takes to drink. There is no alternative.

The unhealthy life of the city set its mark on him. ' Fish- soup, bread and *kvass* with onions, were his daily fare, but he drank red wine and Madeira ... always jolly in his cups, singing and dancing as the villagers do ; whenever we remonstrated with him, he would say that he could never drink enough to drown the sorrow that was to come.’ That is the description given by his daughter of Rasputin ' at home ’ in Petrograd. But these mild debauches were constantly supplemented by swinish orgies outside. Many a peasant, placed in the same position, would have acted in the same way.

Rasputin was just an ordinary peasant. He was rustic even in the measure of his 'perquisites.' In his native Pokrovskoe it was not considered dishonourable to cheat one’s neighbour, but always in a small way, of course. So here, this man, who could have amassed a colossal fortune, contented himself with dabbling in small ' affairs ' that brought in a few hundred roubles. His whole estate at the time of his death did not much exceed £10,000. Matrena declares most positively that he never possessed or attempted to display at home any occult gift of mesmerism, healing, or clairvoyancy.

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This drunken immoral peasant nevertheless played a political role. He gave advice to the Tsar on all sorts of important matters. He even had the audacity to stamp his foot at Nicholas for not heeding it. We know that at least on one occasion he directly influenced the Tsar to take a fatal decision. For the Imperial fete day, December 6/19, 1916, all political Russia, nobles, burgesses and peasants, expected the Tsar to go to the Duma and announce the formation of a Ministry enjoying public confidence. Alexandra was, of course, violently opposed to any concession, but she feared the influence of the Army on Nicholas, and Rasputin was produced for the occasion. He succeeded in dissuading the hapless monarch, to Iris undoing and to the ruin of the Army and of Russia.

I do not propose to rehearse the well-known stories about Rasputin's influence on the dismissal or appointment of ministers or prelates. Those stories are true only in so far as they represent Grishka acting as the instrument of another person's will, in most cases Alexandra's. He was too ignorant, too petty, to understand political questions. For instance, he was always urging the Emperor to come into direct contact with the people. ' Get rid of the ministers. They lie to you. Address yourself direct to the people. You will then know the truth and everything will right itself.' Nicholas became rather tired of this parrot-like repetition. He had heard it all so often from his wife. One day he told Rasputin : ' It sounds very nice, but how is it to be done ? You know quite well that if I took your advice I should very soon lose my life.' ' No, never,’ was the reply. ' You will be killed by an intellectual, not by a peasant ’—not a convincing or cheerful response.

On one point Rasputin took what seemed to be a line of his own : he was against the war with Germany. ' She is too strong. We must be friends,' he declaimed. This view did not reflect the mind of the Empress. Who had instilled it into him ? It is not difficult to guess. His daughter and her husband are known to have been acquainted with one of the secret agents of Germany. Besides, there were also Bad- maiev and a number of other doubtful personages around him. When war broke out Rasputin was lying wounded at Pokrovskoe. The Tsar telegraphed to him about the war. Grishka fell into such a rage that his wound reopened. Nicholas wrote to Rasputin only one letter. It was stolen from Grishka by Iliodor, his disappointed rival. It contained nothing of special importance.

He served the German interest in a more subtle and redoubtable manner. His very existence was bringing about the collapse of Russia by destroying the faith of the people in the Tsar. All the foremost supporters and friends of the ' saint ' were of the German orientation. That was not a coincidence. Everyone who even tolerated Rasputin was helping the enemy.

* * * * *

It being pretty well established that Rasputin was the direct cause—in the Empress's hands—of the Revolution and downfall of Russia, I would ask what the Ludendorffs and their Russian dupes have to say in justification of the argument that it was the Entente that brought about the Revolution. Rasputin's relationship to the defeatists was so clear to everybody in Russia that people—Russians as well as Allies—fell naturally into the mistake of supposing that the Empress must be pro-German, since she supported Rasputin. Who magnified Rasputin before the war ? The *Cologne Gazette.* Who was his arch-apologist ? The pro-German Witte. The Germans had almost as much to do with the Rasputin scandal as they had to do with Lenin and the exploits of his hundred Jews.

[Ludendorff. War Memories, Vol. II, page 413.. . . The Tsar... was overthrown by the Revolution, which was favoured by the Entente. The Entente's reasons for backing the Revolution are not clear. At all events, it is certain that the Entente expected the Revolution to bring them some advantage in the war. They wished at least to save anything that could be saved and, consequently, did not hesitate to act. The Tsar, who had begun the war in order to please the Entente, had to be removed.']

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The murder of Rasputin evoked the greatest outburst of popular rejoicing that any act had ever produced. *' Ubili! '* (they have killed) was the universal greeting. People did not stop to ask who had been killed. They knew. The whole nation had desired his death, and one wonders that he so long survived. But his murder was, none the less, a mistake, since he was merely an ignorant tool, and the circumstances of his end—the lawless joy that it evoked—only helped the revolutionaries. Thenceforth, the Empress's name was in the gutter, and there was only one hope of salvation for the Tsar—to dissociate himself from his wife. To do that—to put her away into a monastery as Tsar Peter Alexeievitch would have done—was quite beyond the capacity of a gentle soul like Nicholas Alexandrovich. . . .

It had been suggested before the Revolution that she should go alone to England ‘ on a visit.' This argued complete ignorance of the inner life of the sovereigns. The Rasputin scandal had arisen because Alexandra morbidly imagined that the destinies of Russia depended upon their joint faith and prayers—hers and the ' saint’s.' Also she was convinced that without her constant presence and support Nicholas would be lost. Sooner would she have died than go away, particularly after the death of her ' saint.'

Speaking to her maid (Tutelberg), who had ventured to express some doubts about Rasputin, the Empress said one day at Tsarskoe : ' Our Saviour chose his disciples among simple fishermen and carpenters, not among learned theologians. It is said in the Gospel that faith can move mountains.

. . I believe that my son will rise. ... I know that people think me mad for my faith, but so did they think of the Martyrs. . . .' Another day she remarked : ' The Revolution was prepared long ago. Our sufferings are nothing ; we are ready to offer up our lives and sacrifice everything if needs be. . . The same witness deposed that Rasputin came seldom to the Palace —' only when Alexis was ill.'

* * * * *

It is the writer’s belief that Alexandra was tempted to dabble in black magic ; her religious faith did not preclude knowledge of occult science, as witness her predilection for cabalistic signs, the swastika, etc. There were persons suspiciously like black magicians around and inside the Palace at various times : Philippe, Papus, Badmaiev. Now Rasputin bore a certain resemblance to Tsar Ivan Grozny, and may have been regarded by Alexandra as an incarnation of the Terrible One—combining in his person

the Peasant and Autocrat, the mystic union in which she saw the salvation of Russia.

There had been plots to kill Alexandra and even the Tsar. It is curious, indeed, that her life should have been spared. One must bear in mind the probability of German [1] protection.' It is evident that Alexandra's death would have put an end to the Rasputin scandal and therefore been unprofitable for Germany. As for Nicholas, the people were on his side to the last—till the Revolution extinguished in men's minds the last vestige of all that was seemly.

The manner of Rasputin's murder is known to all. The man who killed him is no more. His diary has been published. It gives almost a complete account of the murder. One feature has escaped attention, and I mention it because it gives point to the true version of Rasputin's character as related above. The accomplices had prepared a most elaborate scheme for killing him, yet in the end it was Purishkevitch with a vulgar revolver that effected the deed. Poisoned tarts, 'doctored' wine, and even a revolver shot had been in vain. The conspirators had innocently administered an antidote with the poison ; the shooter's hand had trembled so that he had failed to hit Rasputin standing a few paces away. But why all this rigmarole ? The fact is the conspirators were affected by the Rasputin propaganda ; they also believed that the man was more than mortal. Purishkevitch thought that the devil was in him till the third bullet brought him down. That was an epoch-making shot.

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Rasputin was fond of identifying his own well-being with that of Russia. In this, as in other things, he merely copied the Empress. When Khionia Guseva, incited by the monk Iliodor, who had fallen out with Grishka, stuck a knife into the ' saint,' he announced that ' much blood would flow ' and that there would be ' woe unutterable if and when he died.' But he was ever prophesying all sorts of things, good and bad, like the proverbial tipster. It suited the interested or superstitious to proclaim him infallible. Anyhow, it did not require, much acumen to read the signs of coming disaster in Russia. Grishka was no fool, and he must have had a shrewd idea what his own friends and supporters were doing. But charlatanism ' paid,' and he had a family to support and lots of ' friends ' coming for assistance, all of which

flattered Grishka's cheap little soul and kept him on his daily round of prayer and debauch.

Rasputin the monster is a fiction, bred in the busy brains of politicians and elaborated by the teeming imagination of sensational novelists. Rasputin the saint is an imaginary product of a woman's diseased mind. Even the stories of the ‘ sanctifying' baths and other ' flagellant ’ *(khlysl)* rites, supposed to have been practised by a demoniacal Grishka, turn out to be imaginary. It is not unusual for the peasants in certain parts of Russia to take the steam bath in common. They admit no strangers, but there is nothing unseemly in their intention. It was quite appropriate for a native of Tobolsk to practise it. And in this and in his gross familiarities with the other sex Grishka was merely Rasputin the Peasant, a village Satyr.

CHAPTER 5: 'THE TSAR IS INNOCENT'

BEFORE the Revolution, propagandists of all descriptions aimed their poisoned shafts at the Empress. Her fatal belief in Rasputin rendered her an easy prey. The revolutionary section watched over Grishka, just as their German accomplices 'protected' Alexandra. Nicholas was left alone, comparatively speaking. After the Revolution all the energies of the dark forces involved were concentrated upon him. It was not enough that he had voluntarily abdicated ; he had to be shorn of all prestige, so that the inveterate devotion and loyalty of the people, which had formed the very foundation of Russia's existence, should be swept away for ever. ' The Tsar was a traitor ; he and his wife had been in secret communication with the Germans.' In city, village and camp this poisonous rumour spread.

Blindly, the Provisional Government did nothing to stop it. The Order of the Day to the Armies, in which Nicholas, bidding good-bye to his soldiers, proclaimed his unshaken loyalty to the sacred cause of Russia, and besought them never to lay down their arms to Germany, was suppressed by telegram from the War Office in Petrograd.

[Here is the text of the suppressed document :•—

' My dearly loved troops, I address you for the last time. After my abdication, for me and for my son, from the Russian Throne, the power is transferred to the Provisional Government which rose on the initiation of the Duma. God help them to lead Russia on the way of glory and prosperity. God help you also, valiant troops, to hold our native land firmly against the evil enemy.

' During two and a half years you endured, daily, the hardships of active service. Much blood has been shed, many efforts have been made, and the hour is already near when Russia, bound to her valiant Allies, by one general impulse to victory, will break the Last efforts of the adversary.

' This unprecedented war must be brought to a full victory. He who thinks now of peace, who wishes it—that man is a betrayer of his Fatherland, a traitor. I know that every honest soldier thinks thus. Then fulfil your duty, defend our native land valiantly, submit yourselves to the Provisional Government, obey your commanders, remember that every weakening of discipline in the service is only an advantage to the enemy.

I firmly believe that the infinite love of our great native land has not died out of your hearts. May God bless you, and Saint George the great Vanquisher and Martyr guide you.
' Nicholas.'

The Order was counter-signed by General Alexeiev, Chief of Staff.]

Evil deeds come back to roost whence they have issued. The people who besmirched the Tsar to please the revolutionaries were themselves punished. One does not undermine the faith of a whole nation without destroying all authority.

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When the Empress and her sick children were proclaimed prisoners of state, and a few days later Nicholas arrived under custody at Tsarskoe, this foul charge of treachery hung over them, poisoning their lives by the mental and even physical torture that ensued. It was because of this abominable he that the ex-Sovereigns were first treated like common malefactors, kept in separate rooms, and forbidden to see or communicate with each other ; and the soldiers and officers of the guard considered themselves justified in persecuting and insulting them, and even their followers deserted them.

After the overhauling of all their private papers by a special court of inquiry instituted by order of the revolutionary chieftain, Kirbiss-Kerensky, even he had to amend his demeanour. *‘ Tsar chist’* (the Tsar is clean), he declared. The Russian phrase means more than ' innocent' ; it is really ' beyond reproach.' But the Jewish Press and the Soviet did not recant their foul slanders. No justice could be shown to the man whom they hated. Captivity lost some of its worst forms after the innocence of the ex-Tsar had been established. But Tsarskoe-Selo was only a prelude to worse martyrdom.

I do not wish to go over the details of the first captivity, a good deal being already known about the five months at Tsarskoe-Selo. Only the more important episodes are given here, based upon the depositions of members of the Imperial household. But before relating these sad memories, I would take the reader a little farther back, and touch upon fateful incidents that have not yet been recorded in their proper bearing.

I have referred to the estrangement of nearly every one of the ex-Empress’s friends as a consequence of her malady. This exodus of intimates included kinsfolk as well as humbler people. Even the Montenegrin Princesses Anastasia and Militza

[They are the wives of the Grand Dukes Nicholas and his brother Peter, and sisters of the Queen of Italy. At one time they were very friendly with the Empress, and through them Rasputin came to the notice of the Court, Afterwards they became enemies of Rasputin.]

were no exceptions to the rule. Coldness between the wives in this case was bound sooner or later to affect the husbands. Alexandra resented the popularity of the Grand Duke Nicholas as a personal affront. In the end she succeeded in persuading her husband to dismiss him and to assume the

Chief Command. But she punished herself. The Tsar at the Stavka (G.H.Q.) began to do things without her knowledge and consent. He actually listened to dreadful stories about the ' saint,' dismissed Stuexmer, and might go further. Rasputin's death helped the Empress to reassert her usual influence. Then, once more, the Tsar went off to Moghilev, and anxiety crept again into the mind of Alexandra.

The illness of the children—they all contracted measles in **a** very bad form—caused her worry of another sort. For a time the Autocrat was forgotten in the mother ; and so, when the rumbling of the Revolution was already loud, she did not discern it. Protopopov, the friend of the departed ' saint,' was assuring her that nothing serious had occurred. When the children were out of danger, she had leisure to take stock of affairs. Realizing that Protopopov was not to be trusted, she sent for the Grand Duke Paul. Rumours about the Tsar tormented her. He was going to abdicate. The idea of such a surrender made her frantic. Paul could not help. She tried to get into communication with her husband by aeroplane. A trusty flying officer was summoned, but even this venture failed.

Remaining outwardly calm, she showed the measure of her anxiety by abandoning the reserve that she had always displayed. Thus she herself came out to the guards battalions and units that had been concentrated around the Palace, and actually made a speech to them.

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On the morning of March 21, General Kornilov came to inform Alexandra ' that upon him had fallen the painful duty of announcing the ordinance of the Council of Ministers that from that hour Her Majesty must consider herself to be under arrest.' This announcement was made to the Empress in the children's play-room in the presence of Colonel Kobylinsky, the new commandant of the Palace. Then General Kornilov asked to speak to the Empress alone. Pie assured her that there was no danger, and then gave instructions for the treatment of the prisoners, based upon kindness and courtesy.

The meeting between husband and wife was a very affecting one. Nicholas came straight to the nursery. They embraced each other tenderly, ' forgetting the world and its troubles in the joy of reunion with their children.' Prison rules, rigorously applied, thenceforth prevented any communication with the outside, and for a time even between the prisoners.

Kerensky set about trying to discover some evidence of collusion with the enemy. Alexandra was isolated. A creature of Kerensky's, named Korovichenko, came to search the Imperial papers. The Tsar politely offered to help him, but met with a rude rebuff, after which he left Korovichenko alone. Having satisfied himself that no such evidence existed Kerensky somewhat altered his demeanour. At his first meeting with the ex-Tsar, he had adopted a tone of haughty familiarity. Later, he became polite, even respectful, addressing him as ' Your Majesty,' instead of plain ' Nicholas Alexandrovich.'

Although the soldiers guarding the Palace were not supposed to enter its precincts, the prisoners did not enjoy immunity from their prying gaze and offensive curiosity. They broke into the Palace and pilfered, ransacking trunks. On one occasion they rushed into the sitting-room where the family had assembled. One of the girls sat between the light and the window, doing some sewing. Her movements silhouetted outside had been suspected to be signals.

An officer accompanying the Minister of War (Guchkov) on one of his visits loudly accused the occupants of the Palace of being ' sold to the enemy ' *(Vy vsie prodazhnyie)*. The fact that he was intoxicated did not lighten the insult. It showed what unworthy suspicions animated people in the Ministries. The ignorant soldiers who imbibed their daily dose of revolutionary lore from the Soviets were not better or worse than their chiefs. By dogging the ex-Tsar's footsteps when he went out for exercise, by shooting the boy's pet goats, and taking away his toy rifle, and by other acts of the same kind the soldiers were merely copying their officers. These demonstratively donned red badges and ignored the Tsar's salute.

Senseless clamour had led to daily espionage of the family. Officers of the guard went into the dining-room at lunch time to see if the prisoners were all in the Palace. The Tsar always greeted them. On one occasion an officer declined the extended hand. Nicholas, deeply hurt, asked him : ' Why ? ' The man, putting his hand behind his back, declaimed : 'I am of the people. When the people stretched their hands out to you, you did not meet them ! '

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At the end of July the captives heard that they would shortly go away. It was impossible to leave them there any longer. The Soviets of Petrograd

and Kronstadt had tried to obtain possession of them by force and by stealth. Once an individual attired in uniform, styling himself Colonel Maslovsky, had made his appearance, and, producing a paper signed Chkheidze, demanded, in the name of the Soviet of Petrograd, the transfer of the prisoners to the Fortress of SS. Peter and Paul, threatening to call in the troops if his demands were not immediately complied with. It was with the greatest difficulty that Colonel Kobylinsky averted the danger, The Provisional Government could not afford to let the Soviets obtain the custody of such valuable hostages. It had to remove them to a place of safety—above all to a place where the Soviets could not easily reach them. Perhaps this explains the selection of such a remote place as Tobolsk. It was chosen by Kerensky without the knowledge of the captives. They thought, till the train was conveying them eastward, that they were bound for the south. The ex-Tsar did not like his destination. He suspected a trap, though what should have made him suspicious is not known.

Permission had been given to the banished sovereigns to choose the persons who were to accompany them into exile. Nicholas selected his aide-de-camp Naryshkin, but as this favourite hesitated, he at once crossed out his name and proposed Ilya Leonidovich Tatishchev, who, with Prince Vasily Alexandrovich Dolgoruky, remained with him to the end, paying for their loyalty and devotion with their lives. In a separate chapter I shall describe the heroism, sufferings, and end of those who were faithful unto death—of the two whom I have just named, of Dr. Botkin and of young Countess Anastasia Vasilievna Hendrykova, angel of purity and grace, whose mere presence at the Court of Alexandra should have kept away all things evil, and of devoted Mlle. Schneider, and of the humbler servitors. The ex-Empress was not permitted, for some unexplained reason, to take her favourite maid.

The evil genius of the household, Anna Vyrubova, had been locked up in the fortress. She and Voeikov, the ex-palace commandant, had been subjected to the most searching interrogation by the members of the ‘ Extraordinary Commission of Inquiry regarding the Dark Forces.’ Such was the high sounding title invented by Kerensky to mobilize all method of bringing home to the Tsar the abominable charges invented against him. Nothing could be proved, because there was nothing to prove. But Kerensky had his spies all the time at the Palace and sent one to Tobolsk.

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Young Alexis celebrated his thirteenth birthday on the eve of departure. The family attended a special service and afterwards offered up the customary prayers for a safe journey. They were going into the unknown. Here in their own familiar surroundings life had not been so terrible towards the end of their captivity. What had the future in store ? The war was still in progress. They could not leave the country Perhaps when peace came, some quiet refuge would open it: gates, and they could live happily together. The girls and the boy were delighted like all young things over the prospect of a journey. Alexis and his sisters had quite recovered from their illness.

At midnight of August 13 Kerensky came to the Palace, assembled the soldiers who had been selected to escort the family, and made them a speech. ‘ You have guarded the Tsar’s family here,' he said, ‘ you also will have to guard them in the new place where they are going by order of the Council of Ministers. Remember, one does not hit a man who is down. Bear yourselves like men, not like cads.’

He then entered the Palace. The ex-Tsar's only brother, the Grand Duke Michael, had been permitted to come to say good-bye. Kerensky gave him ten minutes with Nicholas, remaining in the room with them. The brothers were never to meet again. Michael did not see any other member of the family.

Learning that the Tsar’s family was to be removed from Tsarskoe-Selo the men employed at the railway station refused to let out the engine. All night the exiles waited for the train. It came at six o’clock in the morning.

CHAPTER 6: EXILE IN SIBERIA

THE period between autumn, 1917, and the following spring furnishes much material for this tragic history. It was during their exile in Siberia that the fate of the Romanovs was decided—not in the Urals. It was at Tobolsk, in the close intimacy that misfortune naturally brings, that the true character of each captive, high and low, asserted itself. Thus, invaluable data have been obtained for the historian.

At first the captives enjoyed the respite of remoteness from the storm centre of Petrograd. But many circumstances gradually impaired this advantage. They began to suffer privations even before the Reds captured the government. The remittances promised by Kerensky did not arrive. After the Bolshevist usurpation, the captives were allowed starvation rations, and had to eke out their livelihood by needlework, drawings, etc. Then the boy fell ill with one of his periodical attacks, aggravated by the exhausting effects of the Siberian winter and inadequate diet.

At Tobolsk Alexandra showed herself to be strong, brave, gentle. Adversity seemed to bring out all that was best in her nature. Yet here the family physician, who had followed them into exile and afterwards shared their fate in Ekaterinburg, became entirely convinced that she was not quite normal. It required only a chance remark on political topics to provoke an hysterical outburst. As usual, she could see nothing bad in the peasants, even when the peasant soldiers of the guard were constantly behaving ' like cads ’ despite Kerensky's exhortations.

Nicholas sawed wood and gave lessons to the children. Indeed, with the help of Mr. Sidney Gibbes and M. Gillard and other teachers, they were making up for time lost in their education.

With so many and such powerful influences interested in their existence, it was only to be expected that efforts would be made to enter into communication with the exiled monarchs. Each of the parties then fighting for power in Russia had its spies and emissaries in Tobolsk. It is certain that the Germans were represented in many ways. It is equally certain that the Entente had nobody. The talk of a rescue by some bold Englishman ascending the Ob and Irtysh from the Arctic Ocean and wafting away the prisoners is not only unfounded, it is the merest moonshine. Winter in Siberia lasts seven months, during which time there is no means of reaching

the northern shores except on sleighs. Any attempt to enter or leave the country would have been easily discovered and notified by telegraph, which was wholly in the hands of the Soviets.

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One comfort was not denied to the captives—they sent and received letters, in some cases without censorship. They were also able to get newspapers and other literature. Thus they were in touch with the happenings of the outer world. These did not bring them much consolation, it must be admitted. Nicholas never recovered from the blow of learning in this manner of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. Up to that time he had, in spite of everything, kept alive some hope for the future of his country. Thenceforth he was a man without hope, and all that happened afterwards left him indifferent. If he could have died without causing pain to his wife and children, he would have died gladly, unable to live down the stain of dishonour.

The exiles suffered unconsciously from the senseless if not traitorous behaviour of a man in whom they naturally trusted— the local priest, Father Vasiliev. Base cupidity may have been his only motive, but it is certain that he caused incalculable harm and must be held accountable for the tales of alleged plots to escape from Tobolsk. The Reds used him as their tool. Perhaps he was not altogether blind. There were other ‘ friends ’ who, proverbially, proved to be worse than enemies. On the other hand, many instances of disinterested loyalty and devotion consoled the captives in their afflictions.

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From Tsarskoe to Tobolsk, the journey under normal conditions required not more than a week. The Imperial exiles reached their destination on August 19, within six days of departure. They travelled in comfort in sleeping cars with a whole retinue of servants. The list of the passengers as officially approved numbers forty-five all told. Two trains conveyed them and their effects. Stoppages were not made at the large stations because local workmen and Soviets were disposed to interfere. They had done so at Zvanka, the first important station on the Vologda-Viatka route, by which the party travelled. The deputy Vershinin, who had brought the Tsar a

prisoner from Moghilev, acted again in the capacity of representative of the Provisional Government during this journey. Ele had the greatest difficulty in overcoming the resistance at Zvanka. The workers did not wish to allow the trains to pass.

At Tinmen two steamers awaited the party for the river trip to Tobolsk. They passed by the village of Pokrovskoe. Alexandra called the children to look at the birthplace of the ' saint ’ on the banks of the stream in which he had fished. She was fond of comparing him to the fishermen of Galilee, humble men like him. The children dutifully complied and joined their mother in prayer—not because they liked or regretted Grishka, but out of love and obedience to their mother. To her diseased imagination this coincidence between the scene of their exile and the home of Rasputin had a mystical meaning.

The voyage had been as pleasant as it could possibly be. The tedium of the long days in the train had been relieved by frequent stoppages amidst forest or field. All who wished could alight and' walk, while the train followed slowly. Such comforts are possible only in Russia. Descending the tributaries of the mighty Irtysh, the exiles had a wonderful picture of the Siberian autumn, with its splendour of colouring and teeming bird life. At Tobolsk they had to remain a whole week in the steamers, because the houses intended for them were not ready. They were, of course, under constant guard, but allowed to take exercise ashore.

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On August 26 they moved into their new prison. Alexandra was suffering more than usual from her trouble. She drove in a comfortable carriage. The Tsar and the family and household walked. With the exception of a few servants, all found accommodation in two houses : one a warm, roomy stone building, formerly the residence of the Governor ; the other adjoining it and known as the Kornilov house. The exsovereigns and their children took up their quarters in the upper storey of the Governor’s house. Here were the Tsar’s study and the bed-chambers of the imperial couple, of Alexis and of the Grand duchesses. Here also was the drawingroom. Downstairs were the school-room, servants’ rooms, and the quarters of the commandant and officers on guard duty. The suite and other servants lived in the Kornilov house. Later, the soldiers expelled many of these occupants

without reason, and, as some of them had to be accommodated in the Governor’s house, there was no small discomfort from overcrowding.

Both houses faced the main street, which had been re-named Ulitza Svobody (Liberty Street). People passing by could see into the lower rooms. It became a custom to bow to any member of the family who happened to be visible, and some of the citizens would demonstratively make the sign of the Cross. Behind the Governor's house was an immense enclosure, surrounded by a high wooden fence. Here the family took their exercise; here the ex-Tsar chopped and sawed wood, and with his own unaided efforts built a sort of wooden terrace, where the captives loved to sit whenever the weather permitted.

Early rising was the rule. All except the ex-Empress were ready for breakfast by 8.30. Alexandra's health was so bad that she seldom left her room before lunch-time. Breakfast, as usual among Russians, was a slight meal of tea and bread. The ex-Tsar had it in his study with his eldest daughter Olga, who of all the children most resembled him in character. The other children and members of the household assembled in the dining-room, situated on the ground floor of the Governor’s house. The Empress had coffee in bed.

Till eleven o'clock Nicholas read or wrote his diary, while the children had lessons. From eleven till noon father and children were in the courtyard. He worked with axe or saw and the young folks played games. At twelve o'clock all went to the school-room and had sandwiches, after which the Tsar left his children to continue their lessons. The family and household met at one o’clock at lunch—a simple meal—after which they were in the open air, weather permitting, till 4 p.m. The Empress seldom left the house. Olga and Tatiana, the two elder Grand duchesses, helped their father in his manual work. Alexis generally had a short sleep after lunch, and then followed the others into the courtyard with his tutors.

Five o’clock tea was served in the Tsar’s study. Then followed an interval for reading or games, then two hours for preparation of lessons. Dinner at eight consisted of soup, fish, meat, sweet-dish and coffee. It was prepared by the Imperial cook, Haritonov, and during the earlier period differed little from the customary repast of old times. Everybody met in the drawing-room after dinner. There were reading and conversation, Court etiquette being forgotten. Alexis retired to rest early. At eleven o'clock tea was served, and soon afterwards all fights were out.

Despite her poor health, Alexandra was seldom idle. In the morning she gave lessons to the children and did needlework. When she remained alone in the house she would play the piano. Often, when the heart trouble was severe, she had dinner also in her room, and then Alexis kept her company.

The company at table included besides the family only the persons already mentioned as forming the household—namely Countess Hendrykova, Mlle. Schneider, Prince Dolgoruky, General Tatishchev, Mr. Gibbes, M. Gillard, and Dr. Botkin. On Sundays came Dr. Derevenko and his son Kolia.

The Tsar gave lessons to Alexis in history, a favourite subject, in which Nicholas was extremely well versed. Alexandra instructed all the children in religion, and taught her favourite daughter Anastasia German—a language that none of the children understood. Anastasia was ambitious to know everything. She studied history with the help of Countess Hendrikova. Another teacher, Mme. Bittner, came afterwards to help in the school-room. To relieve the monotony of their lives, the children were encouraged to take up private theatricals. Several plays, English and French, were produced with great success.

To the Empress's intense joy, they were permitted to attend church. Her greatest sorrow at Tsarskoe had been the interdict on church-going, the nearest place of worship being outside the precincts of the Palace and therefore inaccessible to the prisoners. Here at last they could go to church, after a lapse of more than four months. But the sacred edifice was closed to other worshippers when the exiles attended it.

Unhappily, this source of spiritual comfort was not unalloyed with temporal drawbacks. Father Vasiliev, the incumbent, did a very rash thing one day. Without consulting anybody, he suddenly intoned the prayers for the sovereigns as if they were still on the Throne. The exiles were powerless to interfere. Of course, the incident came to the knowledge of the whole garrison immediately afterwards, and led to the sort of reprisals that one might have expected : church-going was stopped for ever, and, what was worse, the soldiers insisted upon having a representative inside the house at all religious services, to see that the above-named practice was not repeated. Thus all the efforts of Colonel Kobylinsky, the good-hearted commandant, to keep the soldiers out of the house were defeated.

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Within a month of their arrival in Tobolsk the exiles were placed under the observation of special emissaries of the Provisional Government : the Komisar Pankratov and his assistant, Nikolsky. The former enjoyed high confidence and renown in revolutionary circles, having spent fifteen years in the Fortress of Schlusselburg and twenty-seven years in exile in Siberia. A typical theorist, dangerous in his teachings, he was personally the best-hearted of men. He adored children, and was the playmate of the young Romanovs, whom he literally enthralled with stories of his prison years. His particular favourite was Marie. Nikolsky, on the other hand, was uncouth, uncultured, brutal, and stupid, and took an apparent delight in bullying the young folks, especially Alexis. With permission from the Government, some medicinal wine had been sent to Tobolsk from Tsarskoe. Nikolsky took the bottles and smashed them.

As a matter of fact, the delightful but not very far-sighted Pankratov caused much more harm than the bestial Nikolsky. True to his revolutionary principles, he immediately proceeded to indoctrinate the soldiers. Perhaps he feared the personal influence and charm of the ex-Tsar. Pankratov talked with them by the hour on the wonders of the Socialist-Revolutionary programme, and, as so often happened in Russia, the ignorant listeners became not Socialist-Revolutionaries but Bolshevists. Anyhow, they very soon lost all respect for authority in the persons of their commandant and officers and began to ill-treat the prisoners. They sank so low that even the young grand duchesses suffered insult. Lewd drawings and inscriptions disfigured the posts of the swing that was their only outdoor pastime. Later, these hooligans broke up the ice-hill that the girls and their father had put up in the yard.

The day came when they included the ex-Tsar in their devilries. Nicholas wore the simplest garb—a soldier’s khaki shirt and overcoat, retaining only his colonel’s shoulder-straps and his Cross of St. George. Suddenly the soldiers decided that he must take off his badges of rank. In vain Kobylinsky remonstrated with them. They threatened violence if their ' orders ’ were not carried out at once. It hurt the ex-Tsar to the quick to cut off his shoulder-straps. Thenceforth the cross alone remained to symbolize his fidelity to Russia and her allies. He kept it ever on his breast to his dying day.

Some of the old soldiers remained immune from Pankratov’s influence, and when the time came for them to be relieved, they visited the ex-Tsar by

stealth to bid good-bye. These were affecting scenes. The men fell on their knees and prayed, and then embraced the captive and blessed him. Of course, Nicholas related all this to Alexandra, whereby her invincible belief in the peasants gathered new strength.

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On several occasions violent disputes arose between Alexandra and one of the ladies, because the latter spoke of the horrible behaviour of the soldiers. Alexandra lost all control over herself, and cried : ' They are all good ! They are all good ! They are led astray by Jews. . . . The people will come to their senses, and there will be order. . . . The soldiers are all right. I wish the officers were more energetic.'

In November, while Kerensky was still at the head of the Government, no money had as yet been received, in spite of all his promises. The funds of the household had run out, and Dolgoruky and Tatishchev, having expended their own substance, had to borrow from charitable souls in the town, giving their note of hand in return. Two months later, word came from the Soviet Government that it had no money to spend on the prisoners. They would be allowed to occupy their houses free of charge, would receive soldiers' rations, and have to work if they wanted anything more. Sorrowfully, they faced the situation. One-third of the servants were at once released, each receiving a certain sum out of the scanty remnants. Nicholas and Alexandra never knew how their faithful followers had to pinch and contrive in order to keep the household from starvation.

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Alexis astonished the household by his precocious understanding. ' I begin to know the truth here. At Tsarskoe everybody told lies,' he remarked one day. ' If I become Tsar, no one will dare to tell me lies. I shall make order in the land.' He combined his mother's will with his father's charm. Those who came to know the boy at Tobolsk are confident that he would have justified his words.

To a visitor at his bedside when he was ill, he spoke his thoughts about Rasputin. The ' saint's ' portrait had been placed by Alexandra near her sick son's pillow. The visitor accidentally upset it. ' Do not pick it up ! ' cried Alexis. ' The floor is the place for it.'

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Towards the end of their exile, some, if not all, of the captives realized the desperate nature of their position, and had scant hope of surviving Bolshevist rule for any length of time. Pathetic evidences of their attitude were found among the papers that remained at Tobolsk and came into the hands of the investigating magistrate. Among them are two prayers written in verse—apparently composed by Countess Hendry- kova and transcribed by the Grand Duchess Olga. Here is an approximate rendering of some of the verses :—

Grant us Thy patience, Lord,
In these our woeful days,
The mob's wrath to endure,
The torturers' ire ;

Thine unction to forgive
Our neighbours' persecution,
And mild, like Thee, to bear
A blood-stained Cross.

And when the mob prevails,
And foes come to despoil us,
To suffer humbly shame,
O Saviour aid us,
And when the hour comes
To pass the last dread gate,
Breathe strength in us to pray,
' Father, forgive them ! '

CHAPTER 7: MOSCOW AND BERLIN

THE intimate connexion between Berlin and Moscow yielded many living examples among the visitors to Tobolsk. Many, if not all, of the spies, emissaries, and other agents appearing there had been at one time or another in the German capital. Yakovlev, the special commissary sent to remove the prisoners from Tobolsk, was no exception to the rule

His appearance was preceded by certain events which must be related here. The soldiers forming the guard at Tobolsk grew tired of Pankratov and his everlasting speeches. By the end of the first week in February (1918) they had decided to get rid of him and of Nikolsky. On the 9th they turned them out of the Kornilov house and drove them out of the town. They then telegraphed to Moscow, reporting what they had done, and asked that a proper commissary— not an appointee of Kerensky—should be sent. But Moscow remained obstinately silent. The time for action had not yet arrived. Meanwhile, the Soviet at Omsk, representing Western Siberia, sent a representative to Tobolsk. He arrived on March 24. This man was a certain Dutzman, a Jew. He did not interfere with the prison *regime* ; indeed, he never came near the governor's house.

At the end of March, Alexis had a severe attack of his illness—the worst ever known. Both legs were paralysed. The pain was excruciating and unremitting. Day and night he cried aloud in his agony, and the prematurely aged and infirm mother had to sit by and comfort him. After a whole month of suffering the patient began to improve and the pains grew less, but he was still a cripple and could not be moved without serious danger. At this juncture appeared the Soviet emissary, Yakovlev. Neither the soldiers nor the captives were surprised. Only a few days later they understood what an important part he had come to play in their fives.

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Yakovlev reached Tobolsk with an escort of 150 horsemen late in the evening of April 22 and unobtrusively took up his residence in the Kornilov house. Colonel Kobylinsky saw him next morning. Yakovlev handed him an order from the Tsik, signed by Sverdlov, intimating that the bearer was entrusted with a mission of the highest importance and that he must be implicitly obeyed, but no hint was given as to the nature of the mission.

Yakovlev then had the men of the guard mustered and showed them a similar document, by which they were informed that any disobedience to him would be punished with death. To sugar the pill, Yakovlev told them that he had brought them a lot of money, the Soviet having decided to pay at the rate of three roubles a day instead of 50 kopecks, the rate fixed by the Kerensky Government. Altogether, Yakovlev showed himself to be an expert in the art of handling peasant soldiers, but he had to overcome opposition of a more subtle kind from a Jew named Zaslavsky, who had insinuated himself among the guards as the representative of the Uralian Soviet. This man had previously caused no end of trouble by ' discovering ' ‘ plots,’ and had almost persuaded the soldiers on one occasion to insist that the Imperial captives should be transferred to the town lock-up. In fact, here once more it was only the coolness of the resourceful Kobylinsky that had saved the situation.

But this noxious individual did not have things all his own way. The Omsk Soviet also had its representative among the guard—-a Russian named Degtiarev. Now the two Soviets—that of Omsk and the one at Ekaterinburg— being constantly at odds, their emissaries were naturally jealous of each other. Thus it was enough for Zaslavsky to take one view in order that Degtiarev should take the opposite one. Zaslavsky had for some reason immediately stirred up opposition to Yakovlev and tried to persuade the soldiers that he was a spy come to deliver the prisoners. With Zaslavsky was an Ekaterinburg workman named Avdeiev, who figured prominently in subsequent events. It is noteworthy that Yakovlev came to Tobolsk by way of Ufa—a roundabout journey from Moscow—apparently in order to avoid Ekaterinburg. Yakovlev had friends in Ufa. It is; probable that he had met Avdeiev there. He appears to have imagined that Avdeiev might help him to prevent or allay suspicion in Ekaterinburg. In this he was mistaken

At a meeting of the soldiers on the 24th, Degtiarev, backec by Yakovlev, attacked Zaslavsky with such vim that the men threw him out, and he made haste to escape to Ekaterinburg to relate a purely imaginary story of Yakovlev's designs to release the Romanovs. But there is evidence to show that he first communicated by wire with Sverdlov. Zaslavsky's poisonous character may have been the only prompting necessary, but it is not impossible that he may have been ‘ inspired ’ from Moscow to play a part in the intricate conspiracy that was to exterminate the Romanovs. Certainly Yakovlev underrated his capacity for mischief, as will appear later.

Sverdlov tried to make the world believe that Nicholas II was to be brought to Moscow for trial. But this may have only been an after-thought. In any case, it was easy to have him intercepted by playing upon local ignorance and suspicion through Zaslavsky.

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Meanwhile, during these two days (the 23rd and 24th), Yakovlev had been repeatedly inside the governor's house, and on each occasion had gone to the boy's room, appearing suddenly, looking fixedly at the patient, and then going away. Nobody noticed his strange behaviour at the time. They remembered it afterwards. No one knew as yet what he had come for. On the night of the 24th Yakovlev went to the telegraph office, taking with him an expert operator who had come with him from Moscow, and had a long conversation over the wire with Sverdlov, the substance of which'—as transpired later—dealt with the boy's sickness and the impossibility of moving him. Sverdlov gave him ' new instructions ' to the effect that he was to bring Nicholas and that since the boy could not come he would have to be left behind for the present.

From the telegraph office, Yakovlev went straight to Colonel Kobylinsky and, for the first time, disclosed the object of his mission. 'But what about Alexis?' remonstrated the commandant. ' That is the trouble,' was the reply. ' I have satisfied myself that he is really too ill to travel, so my orders now are to take the ex-Tsar alone and leave the family here for the present. I propose to start to-morrow. Arrange for me to see him at once.' It should be explained that as the roads would, in a few days, become impassable, and the river-ice break up any moment, owing to the advance of spring, it was necessary to leave Tobolsk at once or wait several weeks till the rivers were clear of ice. Hence Yakovlev's haste. But as he was apparently well acquainted with the character of the Empress, he insisted that Nicholas should receive him alone.

The ex-Tsar appointed two o'clock on the following day for the interview. Alexandra became furious on learning that she was not to be present. When Yakovlev entered the drawing-room, she met him with flaming eyes and asked him how he dared to separate husband and wife. Yakovlev, with a shrug of the shoulders, addressed himself to Nicholas ; ' The Moscow Central Executive Committee have sent me as Commissary Extraordinary with power to remove the whole family, but as Alexis

Nikolaievich is ill I have received orders to leave with you alone.' The Tsar replied : ' I shall go nowhere.' Yakovlev remonstrated : ' You must not say that. I have to carry out orders. If you refuse to go, I must either use force or send in my resignation, and then some one else will come who will be less humane. Have no anxiety ; I answer for your life with my head. If you do not wish to go alone, take anybody you like. Be ready to leave to-morrow at four.' Yakovlev thereupon left without addressing the Empress.

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Kobylinsky remained in compliance with a request from the ex-Tsar. Alexandra and Tatishchev and Dolgoruky stood by. ' Where do they want to take me ? ' asked Nicholas. ' To Moscow,' was the reply. ' Yakovlev let it slip out when I inquired how long he would be away before returning to fetch the family.' The ex-Tsar nodded, as if the news confirmed his own knowledge. Turning to his followers he declared : ' You see they want me to sign the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. But I would rather cut off my hand than do so.'

Alexandra, much agitated, interposed : ' I am also going. Without me they will persuade him into doing something, as they did once before. . . .' And she fired a volley of abuse at Rodzianko for his part in the abdication. But in the stress of the moment she had forgotten her sick boy. The hours that followed will ever be recalled by all who survive as the most painful of their memories. This distracted mother, too feeble to stand for more than five minutes, paced her room like a caged tigress. She summoned her favourite daughter Tatiana and burst into a storm of weeping. For the first time her attendants saw her lose all self-control. In broken sentences she disburdened herself of her sorrow, revealing in her distress the innermost thoughts of her mind : ' The Germans know that their treaty is valueless without the Tsar's signature. . . . They want to separate him from his family in order to frighten him into some disgraceful act. . . . He will be afraid to refuse on our account. ... It will be a repetition of Pskov. . . .'

She wrestled with herself, praying that she might not have to choose between her husband and her son, hoping that the river might suddenly open and prevent any travelling. At last she came to a decision, and, jumping up, cried : 'It is enough, I go with the Emperor.' Nicholas entered the room. She greeted him with the words : ' I shall not let you go alone.' ' As you will,' was his reply.

Volkov, the Empress's confidential man-servant, deposes that he saw her in the Tsarevitch's room, and as she was going out inquired what was the matter. Alexandra replied: *' Gosudar* (the Tsar) is to be taken away to Moscow. They want him to conclude peace. But I am going with him. I shall never permit such a thing. What would our Allies say ? '

Madame Bittner spoke to the Tsar at this same juncture. She suggested that 'they,' meaning the Germans, would take him ' out of the country.' He replied : ' God grant that it be not so. Only not abroad ! ' This witness deposes that the whole family dreaded the idea of being sent abroad, i.e., to Germany.

In this connexion I recall a remarkable passage in one of the depositions. Some member of the household at Tobolsk was reading out of a newspaper the statement that the Brest- Litovsk Treaty contained a clause assuring the safety of the Imperial family. The Empress broke in with an angry exclamation in French : ' I had rather die in Russia than be saved by the Germans.' (Je *prefers mourir en Russie que d'etre sauvee pour les allemands.)*

It was then settled that the party with the Tsar should include : Alexandra, the Grand Duchess Marie, Prince Dol- goruky, Dr. Botkin, and the servants Chemodurov, Demidpva, and Ivan Sednev. On receiving the list, Yakovlev said : 'It **is** all the same to me.' The soldiers were again assembled on the evening of the 25th to be informed of the Tsar's removal.. To forestall any objections, a number of them were selected to accompany the party.

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The vehicles that were to convey the travellers to Tiumen, where they would find a train, did not differ from the ordinary Siberian *tarantass*—a large basket swung upon long flexible poles uniting two springless axles, the baskets being filled with straw. Into these vehicles the travellers tumbled and disposed themselves as best they could. Alexandra had a *troika,* the others a pair of horses. She beckoned to the Tsar to mount with her, but Yakovlev sent Marie to join her mother, and shared his *tarantass* with Nicholas.

The roads were terrible. No traveller who has not experienced springtime travel in Russia can have any idea of them. At some places the party had to alight and walk through deep slush. The Empress was better off than the

others as she had a stronger team. Yakovlev was hurrying as fast as horseflesh could go. Relays waited at stated intervals. The travellers passed from one *tarantass* into another. It was better to lose no time as every day the roads became worse, but there was another reason : Yakovlev was evidently afraid of being stopped by the local Soviets and wished to rush past before they had had time to oppose him.

Throughout the trip he conversed with the ex-Tsar on politics, endeavouring to talk him over to a certain point of view—but the Tsar would not give way. This much the coachman who drove them could swear to, although he could not catch all the details of the conversation. He noticed that Nicholas did not ' scold the Bolsheviks,' but somebody else.

They reached Tiumen on the 28th at 9 p.m. A special train was in waiting. They started westward, but had not travelled far when at a wayside station Yakovlev heard that Ekaterinburg would intercept him. What he feared had happened. The only hope lay in circumventing Ekaterinburg. For this purpose it was necessary to return, go east as far as Omsk- Kulomzino, and thence switch on to the Cheliabinsk-Ufa railway. But he was too late. The Soviet at Ekaterinburg had wired to Omsk that the ex-Tsar was escaping eastward, and a cordon of Red guards stopped the train at Kulomzino. Yakovlev detached the engine and went across the Irtysh to Omsk, and there, with the help of his private telegraphist, spoke with Moscow. He was ordered by Sverdlov to proceed via Ekaterinburg. As might be expected, they were met by a strong force of fanaticized Red guards at the station at Ekaterinburg (April 30). Yakovlev's authority was flouted and the escort and guards that were with him imprisoned till he had departed empty-handed on his way to Moscow. The unfortunate Romanovs thus came into the hands that were to massacre them and their belongings.

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Yakovlev had no hand in this foul conspiracy. He had been quite sincere and consistent in his efforts to bring the whole family safely to Moscow. There is no indication whatever, in all he said, that the object of this removal was to bring the Tsar to trial. On the contrary, the conversations with the Tsar, continued in the railway carriage, where, again, he was separated from Alexandra, gave additional colour to the version already given by Nicholas himself—that it was intended to restore the monarchy under certain conditions.

[1. It must be borne in mind that the virtual ruler in Moscow was Count Mirbach (see Chapter II), the Bolshevist leaders being appointees and vassals of Germany, though, perhaps even then, secretly conspiring against their masters. Further, it is known that many influential Russians were intriguing with Mirbach (May, I9r8) to restore the Monarchy. This movement collapsed because the two ' orientations ' —German and Entente—could not agree. The ' Germans ' wanted Alexis ; the ' Ententes ' favoured Michael. The original Act of Abdication was stolen from the Senate House in Petrograd by German agents in the early summer of 1917 to remove this trace of Alexis being out of the succession. Cf. also f.n. to Ch. I.]

Speaking of Yakovlev, the ex-Tsar afterwards said : ' Not a bad sort — evidently sincere.' Alexandra did not cease to bewail her misfortunes, weeping over her son and her husband.

On reaching Moscow, Yakovlev must have had some doubts about the sincerity of the Tsik. Anyhow, he resigned his commissaryship and eventually joined the White forces, and then mysteriously disappeared. An interview with him, published in a Red organ at the time of his journey in charge of the Imperial captives, contains some very instructive features. It passes over in silence the attempt to evade Ekaterinburg and falsifies the dates of arrival and departure at Tiumen so that the glaring discrepancy between this and the arrival at Ekaterinburg (two days instead of half a day) should not be noticed ; ignores, in fact, all the local Soviet intrigues and protests, quite needlessly, that he did not mention politics in his conversation with Nicholas. Vasily Vasilievich Yakovlev had been a naval officer and was therefore of Russian noble blood. He had committed some political offence, had spent many years abroad—in Berlin. Who were his real chiefs ? It is not difficult to guess.

Two other Commissaries went to Tobolsk to remove the remainder of the family—Tatiana had been left in charge oi the invalid and household. Olga, the eldest daughter, did not enjoy her mother's confidence in the same degree. She took far more interest in literature than in the practical affairs oi life, and would hide herself in a corner with a book or tell stories to the soldiers, utterly forgetting domestic trifles. Anastasia, still a child, and rather backward, could be left in Tatiana's care. Marie went with the Imperial couple because she was too grown-up to remain under her sister's care. She was a very attractive girl, and it used to be rather a joke among the grand duchesses to twit her on her ' conquests ' among the Commissars.

The two successors of Yakovlev were : A sailor named Hohriakov and a certain Rodionov. The latter was afterward identified as a former gendarme

officer. He used to inspect the passports at the German frontier, and served some time in the Russian Embassy at Berlin as a spy on Russian revolutionaries. When taxed with it, he admitted the impeachment

The sailor, a typical good-natured peasant, soon made friends with all the children. Rodionov, on the contrary, went out of his way to torment and ill-treat them. He forbade the grand duchesses to lock their doors at night, informing them with a leer that he had a perfect right to come into their rooms whenever he liked. With every appearance of enjoyment, he announced that in Ekaterinburg they would have to observe stricter rules, which he himself had devised. Hohriakov was nominally senior to Rodionov, but the latter did what he pleased.

* * * * *

Here must be recorded a circumstance which was destined to play an important part in the detection of the murders of Ekaterinburg. Before separating, it had been understood between mother and daughters that they would take measures for safeguarding the jewels that had been brought with them from Tsarskoe, worth not less than a million gold roubles (£100,000). A letter from the maid Demidova from Ekaterinburg gave the necessary indications. The grand duchesses were ' to dispose of the medicines as had been agreed.' This meant that the jewels had to be secreted in the clothing in such a way as to escape search (Nicholas, Alexandra, and Marie had been ' searched ' very thoroughly and brutally). For some days the grand duchesses and their trusty servants worked at the task, sewing up the valuables in their bodices, in their hats, and even inside their buttons. The Empress had few if any valuables with her—possibly because there had been no time to secrete them; but thanks to the precautions now taken, the grand duchesses managed to smuggle all that was of greatest value into their last prison-house. Womanlike, they clung to these relics of former happiness, and perhaps deep down in their hearts slumbered some hope that the gems might help them to escape.

Leaving Tobolsk by steamer on May 20, the family and household reached Ekaterinburg on the 22nd without incident.

CHAPTER 8: VIA CRUCIS

NOTHING had been done at Ekaterinburg to prepare for the arrival of such prisoners as the ex-Tsar and his family till April 27 (i.e. two days after the spy Zaslavsky had denounced Yakovlev). The arrangements then taken consisted in requisitioning Ipatiev's house and putting a rough hoarding around it. Zaslavsky reached Ekaterinburg in company with a Russian workman named Alexander Avdeiev, who had been with him at Tobolsk and become imbued with the Jew's tale of Yakovlev's alleged-treachery. In return for his support and blind subserviency, this man received the post of commandant of the new imperial prison and promises of further promotion.

Isai Goloshchekin, the intimate friend of Yankel Sverdlov, took charge of the prisoners on their arrival. Isai played the part of a Bolshevist Pooh-ba, being a Komisar many times over, but above all he loomed largely in the local *chrezvychaika.* He supervised the removal of the prisoners from their railway carriage, completely ignoring Avdeiev, and took them away in his motor-car. On reaching the Ipatiev house, Goloshchekin told the imperial trio to descend, then pointing to the door, said: ' Citizen Romanov, you may enter.' In the same manner he let the ex-Empress and Marie pass the threshold. . . .

Prince Dolgoruky, who was of the party, did not meet with Goloshchekin's approval. ' You go to another prison,' said he, and straightway Dolgoruky was removed, never to be seen again.

When, three weeks later, the other children and remainder of the household arrived, the same procedure was adopted. Once more Avdeiev was ignored, the person in charge being Rodionov. His brutalities at Tobolsk had earned him distinction. Here he excelled himself. It was raining heavily and the platforms were slimy with mud. He would not permit any one to help the Grand Duchesses to carry their own luggage. Nagorny, one of the imperial servants, was knocked over for daring to extend a hand to Anastasia, dragging a heavy bag.

Nobody had permission to share the new prison with the Romanovs except the physically weak or mentally undeveloped. The only exception was Dr. Botkin. Those who did not enter the house went to other prisons, the two foreigners excepted.

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The family, once more reunited, had need of all their love and faith to endure the sufferings that marked this last stage of their earthly pilgrimage. Besides them and their physician only four servants were permitted to remain—the chamber-maid Demidova, the footman Trupp, the chef Haritonov, and the boy Leonid Sednev, attendant and playmate of the sick Alexis. Chemodurov, the Tsar's valet, was transferred to the town prison from the Ipatiev house three weeks after his arrival. He survived, but his mind was affected.

This building stands at the corner of Vosnesensky Prospekt and Vosnesensky Pereulok (lane) facing a large square in which stands the church of the Ascension (Vosnesenia), a prominent landmark in the city and suburbs. It is a two-storey stone building with a garden and outhouses behind, to which access is obtained through a gateway into the square. As the lane descends steeply from the square, the lower storey is a semi-basement in front, gradually clearing the surface of the street on the lane side. The lower floor was occupied by the guard ; the prisoners lived upstairs in the corner rooms away from the stairs and entrance, which were on the gate side. Nicholas, Alexandra and Alexis shared one room facing the square ; the adjoining chamber, overlooking the lane, was occupied by the Grand Duchesses. The family could not leave these two rooms except for meals, which were taken in the adjoining dining-room. Another room, divided into two halves by an arch, accommodated Dr. Botkin and Chemodurov on one side and the servants on the other. From the dining-room a door led to a terrace overlooking the garden.

Around the house, a wooden hoarding reached up to the windows of the upper floor. Soon after the prisoners arrived, another hoarding was put up, completely screening the whole house up to the eaves, and enclosing also the front entrance and gateway. There were double windows, as usual in Russian houses. Both panes were covered with whitewash, rendering it utterly impossible for the prisoners to see anything outside —even a crow flying.

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Sentries paced between the hoardings, inside the garden, and were stationed at the stairs, beside the lavatory and on the terrace. Here, and at

other convenient points, machineguns were posted. The prisoners were in a trap from which there was no escape. The awful thing about it was the constant surveillance, by day and night. There was no privacy, not even for the girls-—no consideration for decency or modesty. The Ekaterinburg period was one long martyrdom for the Romanovs, growing worse-—with one short interval—as the hour of their death approached. Their guards, at first, were Russians, who, brutal as they were, never attained the fiendish ingenuity in tormenting their helpless captives that came to be displayed by the alien guards and executioners of the final week.

There had been no provision for guarding the house—another proof that the prisoners had not been intended for Ekaterinburg. After the first few days, a regular guard was organized from workmen employed at the local mills and iron works. Alexander Avdeiev received the style of ' Commandant of the Special Purpose House '—such was the name of the imperial prison. His assistants were Alexander Moshkin and Pavel Medvedev, both workmen and Russians. Avdeiev and his particular friends among the guards lived upstairs in the ante-room and another chamber facing the square. They were, consequently, in immediate proximity to the prisoners. No pen can describe what this meant.

The men were coarse, drunken, criminal types, such as a revolution brings to the surface. They entered the prisoners' rooms whenever they thought fit, at all hours, prying with drunken, leering eyes into everything that they might be doing. Their mere presence was an offence ; but picture the torments of the captives to have to put up with their loathsome familiarities ! They would sit down at the table when the prisoners ate, put their dirty hands into the plates, spit, jostle and reach in front of the prisoners. Their greasy elbows would be thrust, by accident or design, into the ex-Tsar's face. Alexandra was, of course, a special object of attention. They would crowd round her chair, lolling in such a manner that any movement on her part brought her in contact with their evil-smelling bodies.

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Prison fare of the poorest kind was provided. Breakfast comprised stale black bread from the day before, with tea— no sugar. For dinner they had thin soup and meat, the latter of doubtful quality. The ex-Empress could eat nothing except macaroni.

The table-cover was a greasy oilcloth. There were not knives or forks or even plates enough to go round. All ate with wooden spoons out of one common dish. By the Emperor's wish the servants sat at table with the family.

The guards sang revolutionary songs devised to hurt and shock the feelings of the prisoners, containing foul words such as no man should dare to utter in the presence of innocent girls ; but the revolutionary warriors delighted in wounding the modesty of the Grand Duchesses in this and in other still more repulsive ways, by filthy scribbling and drawings on the walls and by crowding round the lavatory—there was only one for the prisoners and the warders. They went reeling about the house, smoking cigarettes, unkempt, dishevelled, shameless, inspiring terror and loathing. They did not scruple to help themselves liberally to the clothes and other property of the prisoners whenever anything came within their reach.

Only a quarter of an hour was allowed to the prisoners in the open air. No physical work was permitted. The ex-Tsar felt this privation very much. Alexandra suffered terribly. Her son remained an invalid, unable to walk. The family seemed to be overwhelmed by grief. But their faith in God and their love for each other illuminated the gloom of this awful prison. Above the ribald songs of their tormentors might be heard the chanting of the Song of Cherubim, the Russian hymn of praise.

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Now we come to the final phase that preceded the murder. It is full of significance. Every step taken by the occult powers of the Ekaterinburg *chrezvy chaika,* which, it must be remembered, did nothing without orders from the central institutions in Moscow—Sverdlov being in direct communication with Goloshchekin—falls into its natural appointed place as part of the cruel fate reserved for the Romanov family.

The monsters who had been placed in charge of the prisoners —as if on purpose to torment them through the agency of Russians—did not fulfil their mission to the end. Even they became humanized by the spectacle of the sufferings and the patience and humility of their former sovereigns—not all of them, of course, but certainly a majority, including their commandant, Avdeiev.

One of these men afterwards related how the change came over him. He had begun with hatred in his heart. The Tsar was the head of the capitalistic

system, the greatest capitalist of them all. To destroy him was to destroy capitalism itself— the Social-Democratic programme had made it all so plain to him. He watched the crowned enemy of mankind, the ‘ drinker of the people’s blood,’ as he walked about the garden, and listened to him exchanging simple, homely words with the other warders. His notions began to waver. This was not a bad man : he was so human, so kindly, just a man like other men, and even better. Then the idea occurred to him that it was wrong to desire his death. What harm could he do ? Why not let him escape ! Yes, it would be much better if he went away, and the children, too; they had done no harm, and the Tsaritsa also. She was proud. Not simple and homely, like the Tsar ; but let her also go. If she had done harm, she had also suffered.

This man repented of the evil he and his fellows were doing. He would sing no more lewd songs, and tried to dissuade the others. Rapidly the whole of the guard—workmen from the Lokalov and Syssert companies’ plants—were becoming disaffected.

* * * * *

Towards the end of June a secret emissary of one of the Monarchist organizations called upon the Bishop of Ekaterinburg and tried to get into communication with the Imperial prisoners through the clergy ; but this proved to be impossible. He then proposed that, at all events, some food and comforts should be sent to the prison-house. Dr. Derevenko, who had been permitted to remain in the city, gave his assistance at this juncture. By some means he was in touch with the warders. Avdeiev agreed to take in milk and other provisions if they reached the house without attracting notice. The nuns of the monastery thereupon sent two novices, dressed in lay garments, to the house, with all manner of dairy produce. Avdeiev received them himself. These journeys became frequent. The poor captives felt comforted, morally and physically. They had not been forgotten, and the men who had been so terrible were so much kinder. Hope once more blossomed. The Grand Duchesses looked bright and cheerful, ' as if ready to smile,’ says a person who saw them at this time. The nuns, emboldened by Avdeiev’s attitude, brought even some tobacco for the ex-Tsar. Avdeiev referred to him as ' the Emperor.’

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In the beginning of July some suspicions must have arisen among the Jewish camarilla, or perhaps Moscow had received ‘ information.’ As the time was getting ripe for ' action,’ no doubt steps had been taken to verify the arrangements, and the discovery of disaffection among the Russian guards followed. Avdeiev was at once dismissed, the Russian guards moved out of the house into premises on the opposite side of the lane, and, with one exception, forbidden to come into the house. This exception was Pavel Medvedev. He retained his post as chief warder. The Russian guard continued to provide sentries for the outside posts only. They could do no harm there, and served to throw dust in the eyes of the public.

All these changes were carried out by the new commandant, a person with whom the reader is already acquainted, namely, Yankel Yurovsky, the son of a Jew convict, himself a mystery man, having obtained money in Germany for unexplained ‘ services,’ and presently one of the chiefs of the local *chrezvy- chaika.* Yankel brought with him a squad of ten ' Letts ' —as the Russians called them—to mount guard inside the prison-house and take charge of the machine-gun posts. These men were the hired assassins of the red *okhrana.* They were not Letts but Magyars, some of them really Magyarized Germans. It must be remembered that Siberia was Sovietized from the east, not by Russians in the first place, but by the soldiers of Wilhelm and his Austrian henchmen, who acted under the orders from the two Kaisers. These so-called Letts had entered the service of the *chrezvychaika* after helping to carry out the German design to undermine Russia.

Innumerable evidences prove that the new-comers are correctly classified. The Russian guards could tell by their speech that they were foreigners. To designate them as Letts was quite natural because the Letts formed the backbone and bulk of the foreign mercenaries of Sovietdom and therefore any non-Russian Red-guard became a ' Lett.’ But, as a matter of fact, the Magyars resemble Letts in their appearance and accent. Yurovsky spoke to them in a foreign language. Besides Russian and Yiddish he knew only German. Among the papers found afterwards in the prison-house was an unfinished letter to his ' Tereschen ’ from one of the ‘ Letts.’ It was in Magyar, but, according to the findings of experts, the writer was evidently a German. He used capital letters for substantives, often employed Gothic

characters and made glaring blunders in grammar, such as no Magyar would make.

Another of the ' Letts ' left a still more eloquent evidence of his nationality. This man had stood on guard on the terrace communicating with the dining-room and overlooking the garden—a very important post with a machine-gun capable of sweeping the interior of the house and all the approaches from the garden side. On the very day before the murder, this man wrote in pencil on the wall of the house a record of his service as follows :—

Verbis Andrds
Orsegen 1918 VII/15

Alongside this inscription he had tried to write the Russian equivalent, but could not spell out the word ' karaul ' (guard duty), in Magyar *orsegen.* Scraps of paper on which other ' Letts ' had practised writing Russian words were also found.

We are able to fix the date approximately when the German- Magyar guard and Yurovsky took possession. The lay sisters bringing their usual offerings met with a strange reception on or about July 10—about a week before the murder. Avdeiev did not come out to them. Some of the Russian guards, whom they knew, were standing near the door, looking very much confused, and at first not disposed to take charge of the gifts. Finally, however, they did so. The sisters then walked away. Presently the soldiers came running after them. ' Please, will you come back,' they said. The nuns returned. An individual whom they afterwards identified as Yurovsky, inquired by whose authority they had brought the provisions. 'Avdeiev and Derevenko,' was the truthful reply. 'Oh, they are both in it, are they,' he remarked ominously. He nevertheless permitted them to come again, ' but with milk only.'

* * * * *

This last week of their lives must have been the most dreadful one of all for the Romanovs. Brutal and bestial as the Russians had been in the early part of their wardenship, they were preferable, even at their worst, to the silent relentless tor tun applied by Yurovsky, who also was a drunkard. He and hi; band watched them literally like a cat watches a mouse. He was

polite to the Tsar and spoke softly to Alexis ; he even permitted a priest to come and say prayers, which comforted Alexandra and the poor captives unspeakably ; yet there is evidence that never had they looked so utterly, hopelessly wretched as under the tutelage of the Jew. This man's brothers and sisters describe him as a ' cruel tyrant who would not hesitate at anything to attain his ends.'

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The man and his executioners only waited for the signal that was to come from Yankel Sverdlov. Everything was ready for the murder. The victims had been adequately tortured. Goloshchekin, the Jew Sadist, licked his lips in pleasurable anticipation.

CHAPTER 9: CALVARY

YANKEE YUROVSKY left the prison-house on several occasions. Each absence lasted many hours. He was surveying the environs of the city for a convenient place to dispose of the bodies of his victims. His escort consisted of one or two of the ' Letts ' mounted on horseback. Several witnesses deposed to meeting him and his bodyguard in the woods during the week that preceded the murder. They were seen near the very spot where the remains were afterwards destroyed.

Whenever he had to absent himself, Yurovsky placed Medvedev in charge. Besides the latter, there was another non-' Lett ' in the house, a certain Nikulin, respecting whom it is known that he came with Yurovsky from the *chrezvychaika.* He enjoyed Yurovsky's entire confidence, and was probably there to keep an eye on Medvedev.

On Monday, July 15, the lay sisters came as usual in the morning with milk for the Imperial Family. Yankel took it himself, and graciously informed them that on the morrow they might bring half a hundred eggs. This they did gladly, thinking that the poor captives would enjoy a hearty meal, all unsuspicious of the cynical intention that had prompted Yurovsky's generosity. (These eggs were boiled by Haritonov, but they were eaten, not in Ipatiev's house, but in the woods.)

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On the Tuesday morning, a whole nine days before the arrival of the Czechs, Vorovsky made his final arrangements for the murder of the family. The boy Leonid Sednev was removed early in the day to Popov's house across the lane, whither the Russian guards had been transferred. There he was seen sitting on the window-sill and crying bitterly ; whether because he was dull without his play-fellow or had some inkling of his fate is not known. The boy disappeared, never to be seen again. Later this gave rise to rumours that Yurovsky had been told to reserve him for future use, perhaps to impersonate his little friend the Tsarevich—in short, to act the part of a False Dmitri.

Two important visitors came to the prison-house during the day—namely, the arch-inquisitor, Isai Goloshchekin, and his humble servant, the Russian workman Beloborodov, president of the regional Soviet. They took

Yurovsky away in their automobile to some place unspecified, presumably to a meeting of the Soviet Presidium (Board). Yurovsky returned some hours later, towards evening.

At 7 p.m. Yurovsky gave orders to Medvedev to collect all the revolvers of the outer guard. Medvedev complied. He brought twelve Nagans (the Nagan is the Russian service revolver) to the commandant's room and handed them to Yurovsky. The latter then confided to him the plan to shoot the whole ' Tsarian family ' that night. He (Medvedev) would have to warn the Russian guards ' later,' when he got word to do so. Meanwhile he must be silent. At nightfall (about 10.30 p.m. in these latitudes in summer time) Medvedev ' told the Russians.' The murderers were to be the ' Letts.'

There is no record of any open protests on the part of these men, who had been ' disgraced ' only a few days ago for their ' friendliness ' to the ' arch-capitalist ' and ' drinker of blood.' There is nothing to be surprised at. Beloborodov had been rendered ' amenable,' because he had ' stolen ' ; here the crimes laid to these men's charge were not only pilfering, but ' counter-revolution.' They knew—and we may be sure they were made to feel—that the *chrezvychaika* would know how to deal with them if they showed truculence. Having " warned ' the Russians, Medvedev returned to the commandant.

Two other strangers now made their appearance. One of them was Peter Ermakov, ' military komisar ' of the Verkh- Isetsk Ironworks ; the other, his assistant, a sailor named Vaganov. Both these men had distinguished themselves by their ferocity. They were professional assassins, ' working ' for the Red inquisition out of sheer blood-lust. But there was another reason for inviting these butchers to the approaching feast of blood. They were both to play a leading part in the ' disposal' of the bodies. Both were friends of Yurovsky. With him they had already, some days earlier, studied and arranged the whole grisly performance.

* * * * *

When midnight by solar time had gone some minutes, Yurovsky went to the Imperial chambers. The family slept. He woke them up, and told them that there were urgent reasons why they should be at once removed ; that there was trouble in the city which might endanger their lives, and that they must dress quickly and come downstairs. All rose, washed and dressed themselves, the Grand Duchesses donning their jewel-stuffed garments.

Each member of the family and their followers put on his or her going-out clothes and headgear. The Empress wore her overcoat. Some of the prisoners even took their pillows—for comfort's sake or because they had precious possessions secreted within.

Yurovsky led the way downstairs ; the family and suite followed. Alexis could not walk. His father carried him in his arms. Dr. Eugene Sergeievich Botkin came directly after the family, and after him came the chamber-maid Demidova, the cook Haritonov, and the footman Trupp.

The procession descended by the back stairs leading from the upper to the ground floor. The door from the lower landing (by the kitchen) to the rooms of the ground floor had been boarded up to prevent direct communication between their former occupants—the Russian guards—and the prisoners. One had to go into the yard and then enter the lower floor by a separate doorway. This was the route followed by Yurovsky and his victims. The motor-lorry that had come for the bodies waited outside the gate of this very courtyard, and in the dim light of the northern midnight the prisoners could probably see the vehicle and must have felt reassured, even if any suspicion of their imminent end had assailed their minds.

Still following Yurovsky, they traversed all the rooms of the lower floor, now tenanted only by ' Letts,' and came at last to the small lobby adjoining the front entrance on the lane (pereulok) side. This lobby was lighted by a small window, heavily grated, looking into the garden. Outside stood a sentry with a machine-gun. He could see everything that went on inside, especially when the interior was lit up for the execution. This man's account played an important part in assembling and corroborating the various depositions dealing with the murder. Opposite the window, a door leads into a small chamber (18 ft. by 16 ft.) with a heavily grilled double window facing the lane. Here also stood sentries outside, able to see what was going on within. This chamber is partly basement. The guards had used it as a dormitory. A locked door led into a basement chamber situated immediately under the Tsar’s prison-room. This comer basement was a store-room where some of the imperial belongings had been deposited—and pilfered. There was no escape in that direction. Besides, there were double barriers outside, intercepting sight and sound.

The family and their followers were ushered into the semi-basement chamber and told to wait. They were not suspicious. It did not occur to them that they were in a trap. As the room was bare of furniture, the Tsar asked to

have some chairs brought. He wished the suffering Empress to rest and the sick boy to sit down. Three chairs were brought in. One was passed to Alexandra, who had been leaning against the wall facing the lobby. Nicholas seated Alexis where he had been standing, in the middle of the room, and sat down beside him. A pillow was placed behind Alexandra. Two other pillows remained in Demidova's arms. The Tsar and the Tsarevich kept their caps on, as if expecting any moment to go out. They thought the vehicles that were to convey them away had not arrived, the lorry being there to take the luggage. On the Empress's right stood three of her daughters, on her left the other daughter and Demidova.

Almost immediately the door into the lobby was obstructed by Yurovsky, his friends and the * Letts.' There were Nikulin,. Ermakov, Vaganov, Medvedev and seven ' Letts ' —the remaining three being on guard duty. There were twelve murderers. Each carried a revolver. The rifles of the ' Lett ' guard were stacked in the adjoining room (where they lived).

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Yurovsky advanced into the death-chamber and addressed the Tsar. There are many versions of this utterance. According to the most trustworthy one, he said : ' Your relatives have tried to save you. But it could not be managed by them, and so we ourselves are compelled to shoot you.'

The twelve revolvers volleyed instantly, and all the prisoners fell to the ground. Death had been instantaneous in the case of the parents and three of the children, and of Dr. Botkin and two servants. Alexis remained alive in spite of his wounds, and moaned and struggled in his agony. Yurovsky finished him with his Colt. One of the girls—presumably the youngest Grand Duchess, Anastasia—rolled about and screamed, and, when one of the murderers approached, fought desperately with him till he killed her, It seems as if the murderers had not been able to aim straight at the boy and girl. Even their callous hearts had wavered. The maid-servant lived the longest. Perhaps the pillows were in the way. She was not touched by the first volley, and ran about screaming till some of the ' Letts,' seizing their rifles, bayoneted her to death. She was covered with stabs. Poor Demidova died the victim of a misunderstanding ; the Reds thought that she was a maid-of-honour and therefore a bourgeoise, whereas she was a simple peasant girl.

Within a few minutes of their entering the room, all was over. No time was to be lost in removing traces of the crime. The floors and walls had to be washed quickly and the bodies sent away. Daylight would soon appear. There was a long way to go through the city. Hardened and ruthless, secure in the impunity of murder under the Soviet system, Yurovsky and his associates were none the less hurrying desperately. They knew that the arrangements for ' executing ' the Romanovs could not be regarded as a trial, nor would the people approve the deed. And so like common murderers, they were desperately anxious to get rid of the corpses. Here Ermakov and Vaganov became invaluable.

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The evidence of three eye-witnesses is given below, namely of Medvedev, one of the actual murderers, of Yakimov, who was present at the shooting, and of a Red Guard named Proskuriakov, who helped to remove traces of the murder. The necessary comments of the investigating magistrate accompany the depositions so that the reader is able to study them in their true perspective.

Medvedev told his wife all about it directly after the murder.
He did not conceal the fact that he himself had fired his revolver at the Romanovs. He even emphasized his active complicity, boasting that he was the only Russian ‘ workman ’ who had taken part in the shooting, and that all the others, besides Yurovsky and his assistants, were ‘ not ours '—i.e., foreigners. Medvedev was caught at Perm while trying to blow up the bridge over the Kama to cover the retreat of the Red Army. He confirmed all the statements that he had made to his wife, except in one particular : he denied having stated that he had himself done the shooting. It is a customary reservation in the case of all who take part in a joint and prearranged murder. The witness testifies to the fact of the murder and names the actual murderers, but persists in declaring that he himself did not do the killing, although he admits to holding a revolver in his hand at the time of the shooting. To divert the evidence from himself he had to invent an *alibi.* Hear what he says in his signed deposition :—

' Yurovsky sent me out, saying, " Go into the street ; see if there is any one about and if the shots can be heard.” I went out into the yard surrounded by the big fence ’ (he means the space between the outside wall and the hoardings), ' and, before I had time to reach the street, heard the

sound of the firing. I returned at once inside the house—only two or three minutes had passed—and, entering the room where the shooting had been carried out, I saw that all the members of the Tsar's family—the Tsar, the Tsaritsa, the four daughters, and the Naslednik (heir), were already lying on the floor with numerous wounds on their bodies, and the blood was flowing in torrents. The doctor, maid, and two men-servants had also been killed. When I appeared the Naslednik was still alive, groaning. Yurovsky went up to him and fired two or three times point-blank into him. The Naslednik was still. The picture of the murder, the smell and sight of the blood, caused me to feel sick. . . . '

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Anatoly Yakimov, the second witness, is the man who had become ' converted ' after remaining a few weeks with the Tsar. He had been a sergeant of the Russian Guard, and remained so after the Russians had been relegated to the outer posts. It was his business to place the sentries and see that they remained at their posts. As the Russian sentries could see into the room where the murdering was to be done, it had not been possible to keep them in ignorance to the end, as explained above. Yakimov ' sympathized ' with the prisoners, but he did not dare to give effect to these feelings. There is good reason to believe that he was present at the murder. Possibly Yurovsky had insisted upon his being inside the house at the time, in order to implicate him in the deed. His *alibi* bears a family likeness to Medvedev's. Like him, he had a full, circumstantial knowledge of the killing that corroborates Medvedev in every essential point, and that could not have come to him unless he had been actually present. He explains that it was all told to him by the sentries —two men who stood outside the death-chamber window and two others who were in the courtyard when the bodies were removed.

He also unburdened himself to his family. According to his own account, he heard of the murder at four o'clock in the morning, after which he could not sleep, but 'just sat and shivered,' as he says. At eight o'clock he went to his sister, a woman of some education, who was married to Agafonov, in official of the Commissariat of Justice. Here is what his sister deposes : ' He came in without saying a word, looking dreadfully upset and exhausted. I noticed it at once and asked him : " What is the matter with you ? " He requested me to close the door, sat down and kept silent, his face convulsed

with terror and his body trembling violently. I again asked him : "What ails you ?" I thought that some great misfortune had overtaken him. He still maintained an obstinate silence, although it evidently caused him suffering. The thought occurred to me : " Maybe they have killed Nicholas." I asked him if it was so. My brother answered something like : "It is all over," and in reply to my further questions he said that all had been killed—i.e., the Tsar himself and all his family, and all who had been with them excepting their little scullion. I do not recall my asking him if he had taken part in the murder, but I remember his saying that he had seen the spectacle of the murder with his own eyes. He related how this sight had so shaken him that he could not hold out, and every now and then had gone out of the house into the open air, adding that his comrades in the guard had upbraided him for it, suspecting him of feeling repentance or pity. ... I then understood him to mean that he had been himself in the room, or so near that he could see the actual murder with his own eyes.'

* * * * *

Here are two corroborative depositions of interest. When Yakimov had left his sister, she immediately ran out to her husband's office. An investigating magistrate named Tomashevsky was in the next room, and saw her standing, weeping, and whispering to her husband. When she had gone, Agafonov came and told this same story in confidence to Tomashevsky. Agafonov saw Yakimov later in the day, and relates what transpired : ' Yakimov came to take leave. [He was going to the front.] I was struck by his appearance : the fat pinched, the pupils distended, the lower lip quivering when I. spoke. The mere sight of him convinced me that all that my wife had said was true. Clearly, Anatoly had passed through some terrible experience during the night. ... I only asked him **:** " How are things ? " He replied, " It is all over " *(vse koncheno).*

Philip Proskuriakov—a youngster, the type of the good- natured peasant—deposed that he had entered the guard at Ipatiev's house principally because he was curious to have a look at the Tsar ; not because he felt hostile to him ; indeed, if he disliked anybody it was the Jews. His narrative impressed the investigating magistrate by its evident sincerity. He did not see the actual murder, having spent the evening with some friends and taken copious draughts of ' denaturat ' (methylated spirits, which were in vogue since the prohibition of vodka), and as a result of these libations, Medvedev

had placed him under arrest. He was locked up in the bath-house and sleeping off his ' spree ' when Medvedev came to wake him and order him to go into the house.

The bodies had been taken out just before he reached the death-chamber. Everything that happened in the house immediately afterwards came under his personal observation. He washed the blood off the floor and the walls. That he positively admits. He discussed the details of the murder with Andrei Strekotin, one of the guards, who enjoyed Medvedev's friendship and had been selected by him to stand at the lower-floor machine-gun post during the ' execution.' This same Strekotin also related his observations to one of his brother-guards named Letemin, arrested later and found to be in possession of a whole collection of valuables belonging to the family and Alexis' spaniel Joy (afterwards brought to England). Letemin's version agreed with Proskuriakov's rendering of the Strekotin eye-witness account. What is still more important, Proskuriakov heard also Medvedev relate the story of the killing.

Medvedev told it to all the guards who, with Proskuriakov, were washing the floor : ' Pashka (Paval—i.e., Medvedev) himself related that he had loosed off two or three bullets at the *gosukar* (the lord—i.e., the Tsar) and at other persons. . . . I am telling the honest truth. He did not say anything at all about his not having fired himself on account of being sent outside to listen to the shots. . . . That is a lie ! '

* * * * *

One pathetic incident escaped the notice of all these witnesses. The Grand Duchess Anastasia took with her a King Charles spaniel, carrying it in her arms into the death-room. The corpse of little Jemmy was found above a heap of cinders— all that remained of the family that had loved her and shared with her their meagre fare. The murderers had knocked the faithful friend on the head and thrown the body down the iron-pit without troubling to burn it. Even in her death the little dog watched over them, and her mangled remains, still recognizable, brought final unmistakable proof of the end of the family.

The Imperial Family

From left to right: Maria, Alexei, Alexandra, Tatiana, Olga, Nicholas, and Anastasia.

Tsar Nicholas II, in 1914.

Tsaritsa Alexandra, in 1914.

Grand Duchess Olga

Grand Duchess Tatiana

Grand Duchess Maria

Grand Duchess Anastasia

Grigory Rasputin

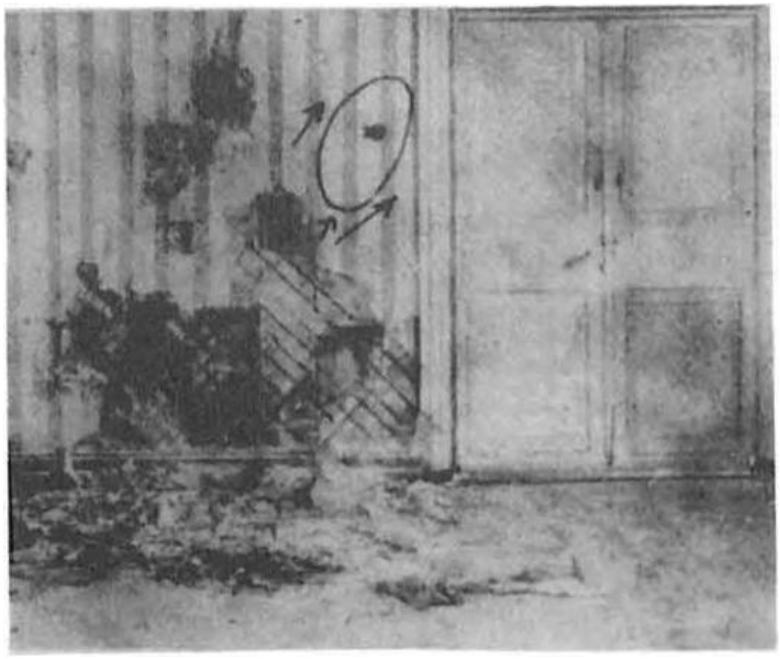
Empress Alexandra in Tobolsk

Yakov Sverdlov, the first Soviet president.

Yakov Yurovksy, commander of the execution squad.

Lenin in his office in the Kremlin, 1918.

Ipatiev House in Ekaterinburg. An arrow marks the semibasement room where the imperial family was killed.

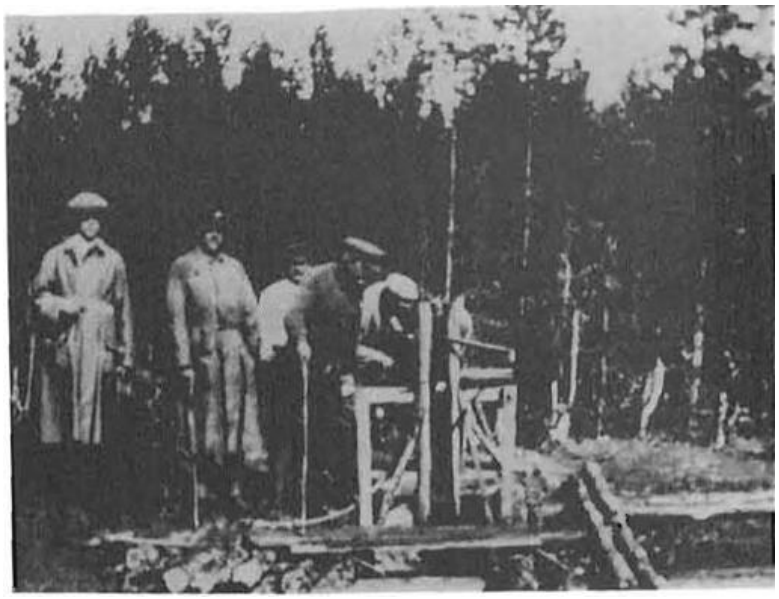


The half-cellar room in the Ipatiev house where the imperial family was killed, photographed from the spot where the killers stood while firing their revolvers. The Emperor and his son sat in the center of the room. Behind

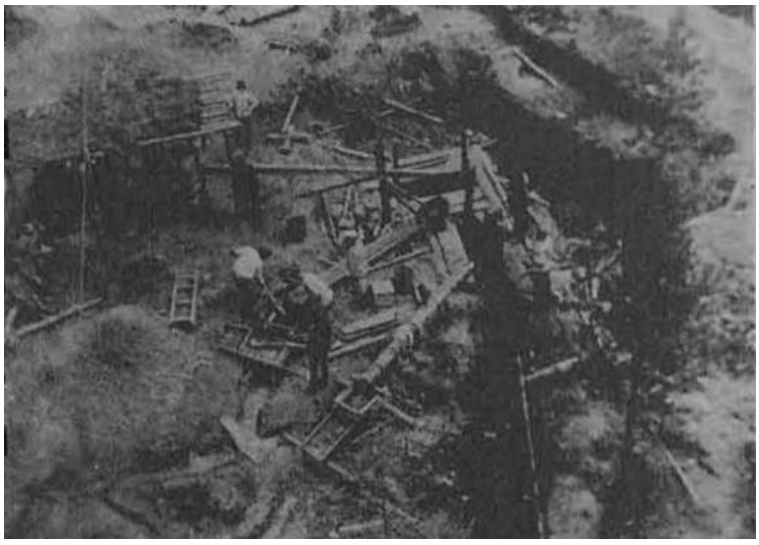
them was the Empress, also seated. The other victims stood.

Nicholas Sokolov, center, head of the investigation commission, makes a point in the garden of the Ipatiev house. Listening are General Diterichs, seated, and M. Magnitsky, public prosecutor of the Ekaterinburg court.

At the site of the Ganina mine shaft, where the remains of the victims were buried. At the bottom of the shaft was a false floor, beneath which the ashes of the victims were concealed. The bodies had been cut up near the shaft and burned on two pyres, one next to this spot.



With the Sokolov investigative commission at the burial site. On the left is Mr. Gibbes, English tutor of the Tsarevich Alexei. On the right, looking down the shaft, is Robert Wilton, London *Times* special correspondent.



Overhead perspective of the burial site.

“Faithful Unto Death.’’ Members of the imperial household photographed at Tobolsk during the period of captivity there. All except Pierre Gilliard, the French tutor (center, rear), died for their loyalty to the imperial family. Countess Henrikova is seated with Mlle. Schneider. Count Tatishchev (left), and Prince Dolgoruky (right) “disappeared” at Ekaterinburg. Two bodies were later found outside the city, one bearing documents of “citizen Dulgorukov.”

CHAPTER 10: ' WITHOUT TRACE’

THERE has probably not been another instance in the whole history of crime of precautions to escape detection half so elaborate as in the Romanov murder case. All sorts of subterfuges have been tried by lesser criminals with more or less success. Here every ruse was combined.

The murderers carried out the following comprehensive programme: (1) They gave out a false announcement of the ' execution ’ ; (2) they destroyed the bodies ; (3) they invented a mock funeral; and (4) they staged a mock trial.

The thoroughness of the methods reminds one of their masters, the Germans. It is a case of ' *spurlos.'* However, in this, as in the other instance, detection followed. The criminal always gives himself away. The very complexity of the Soviet ‘ precautions ’ proved their undoing.

In vain they drew innumerable herrings of their own colour over the trail, suborning false witnesses to give misleading information about the whereabouts of the bodies, announcing officially that the family had been removed to ' a safe place,’ etc. Sokolov has run them into the open.

*****

The murder accomplished, all the bodies were carried into the courtyard and placed on the waiting lorry. The corpses were not subjected to a thorough search—as we shall see—because Yurovsky was anxious to get away from the city before daybreak. They were rolled up in old coats and covered with mats to conceal the' cargo ’ from prying eyes. Yankel Yurovsky, Ermakov and Vaganov went with them.

As soon as they had gone, Medvedev summoned the Russians to ' wash up.’ They had not been trusted to do the other work, and Yankel had even deprived them of their revolvers— the ' Letts ’ had their own—perhaps because he did not feel quite sure how they might behave during the murder. Even now, Medvedev, his henchman, called up the Sysert workmen —his own particular friends—to remove the tell-tale traces of the crime. They washed and swabbed the floor and the walls in the death-chamber and in the other rooms through which the bodies had been borne. (So much blood had flowed that the marks of the red-stained swab were distinctly visible a year later when I visited Ipatiev’s house, and experts found

unmistakable evidence of its being human blood.) The stones in the courtyard were also scoured.

*****

Meanwhile the lorry, with its tragic burden, was making its way to the appointed place in the woods, a remote corner of some disused iron-mines, once the property of Countess Nadezhda Alexeievna Stenbok-Fermor and now of the Verkh- Isetsky Works. This place is situated north-east of the Perm and Ural railway lines, about eleven miles out of the city, near the forest road leading to the village of Koptiaki.

Ermakov (military komisar for the district) placed a cordon of Red Guards all round the wood. During that and the two following days and nights all passage through it was stopped. As will be seen later, this ' precaution ' defeated its purpose.

*****

Let us return for a few days to Ekaterinburg. Yankel Yurovsky had reappeared in the death-house in the morning of July 17. None of the Russian guards knew where he had been. Medvedev had heard vaguely that he had ‘ gone to the woods.’ At the same time there appeared the reprieved thief Beloborodov and his master, Isai Goloshchekin.

The movables belonging to the murdered family went to satisfy their rapacious instincts. Some of the witnesses describe tables laden with precious stones, jewellery, and all sorts of other articles scattered about the Commandant’s room. Everything had been ransacked, and what was not found to be worth keeping was thrown away or destroyed in the fireplaces, which were blazing, despite the summer heat.

Yurovsky and Goloshchekin travelled by motor-car to the woods on the 17th, 18th and 19th, remaining for many hours —in fact whole days—at the iron-pits. But all this time the sentries were on duty outside the death-house as if nothing had happened, so that the people should suspect nothing. They were removed only on the fourth day, when the cordon around the wood was also raised.

*****

Only then (on July 20) was the announcement made at Red meetings and in official proclamations that ‘ Nicholas the Sanguinary ' had been executed. The news was simultaneously transmitted by the wireless stations of the Bolshevist Government, and appeared in *The Times* of July 22 (1918) in the following form :—

At the first session of the Central Executive Committee elected by the Fifth Congress of the Councils a message was made public, received by direct wire from the Ural Regional Council, concerning the shooting of the ex-Tsar, Nicholas Romanov.

Recently Ekaterinburg, the capital of the Red Ural, was seriously threatened by the approach of the Czecho-Slovak bands. At the same time a counter-revolutionary conspiracy was discovered, having for its object the wresting of the tyrant from the hands of the Council's authority by armed force. In view of this fact, the President of the Ural Regional Council decided to shoot the ex-Tsar, Nicholas Romanov. This decision was carried out on July 16.

The wife and son of Romanov have been sent to a place of security. Documents concerning the conspiracy which were discovered have been forwarded to Moscow by a special messenger.

It had been recently decided to bring the ex-Tsar before a tribunal, to be tried for his crimes against the people, and only later occurrences led to delay in adopting this course. The Presidency of the Central Executive Committee, after having discussed the circumstances which compelled the Ural Regional Council to take the decision to shoot Nicholas Romanov, decided as follows: The Russian Central Executive Committee, in the persons of the Presidium, accept the decision of the Ural Regional Council as being regular.

The Central Executive Committee has now at its disposal extremely important material concerning the Nicholas Romanov affair : his own diaries, which he kept almost to the last days ; the diaries of his wife and children ; his correspondence, amongst which are letters by Gregory Rasputin to Romanov and his family. All these materials will be examined and published in the near future.

Every word of this official statement is important, for every phrase contains a lie, and every lie shows up in more glaring colours the diabolical nature of the plot hatched and carried out by Yankel Sverdlov and his tools and accomplices. I take the falsehoods *seriatim* : (1) The message made public at the Tsik as coming from the Ural sovdep was in reality concocted by Sverdlov ; (2) the Czechs entered Ekaterinburg OTi the 25th, nine days after the ‘ execution,’ and there was ho armed plot ; (3) the Presidium of the Ural sovdep did not ' decide ’ to shoot the ex-Tsar, for that ‘ decision ’ was dictated from Moscow ; (4) the ' wife and son ’ were not sent to ' a place of security,’ but were basely murdered ; (5) no ‘ later occurrences' supervened that could by any stress of the imagination be construed into a justification for not bringing the ex-Tsar before a tribunal, even supposing there had ever been any real intention to do so (as a matter of fact, this story of a ‘ tribunal ’ was invented) ; (6) the Imperial correspondence taken with other ‘ loot ’

[Up to date (August, 1920), the only information that has reached the world respecting the Imperial Family's private papers, removed to Moscow after their death, is contained in three short

telegrams published in The Times of August 16, August 28 and September 28, 1918.

The first gives an extract of the Tsar's diary for March 2-15, the day of his abdication at Pskov :—

' General Ruzsky came this morning and read to me a long conversation which he had had on the telephone with Rodzianko, according to which the situation at Petrograd is such that a Cabinet of members of the Duma will be unable to do anything because against it are fighting the Socialist Parties in the shape of workmen's committees. My abdication is necessary. Ruzsky has transmitted this conversation to General Headquarters, and Alexeiev passed it on to all the Commanders-in-Chief. At 12.30 came answers from all, the sense of which is that, to save Russia and keep the Army at the front quiet, I must make up my mind to this step. I have consented. From G.H.Q. they have sent a draft of a manifesto. In the evening arrived from Petrograd Guchkov and Shulgin, with whom I had a long talk, and handed them the signed manifesto, as altered (i.e., renouncing the Tsarevich'p rights as well—the Tsar's own decision). At 1 o'clock in the morning left Pskov with a heavy feeling, due to all I have lived through. Ani surrounded by treachery, cowardice and deceit.'

The second reproduces a letter dated January 14, 1916, from the Empress Marie to ' Niki,' complaining of Witte's delay in summoning the Duma, bids the Tsar be strong, congratulating him on bis ' new' spirit.' On April 5 (at Tsarskoe) the Tsar in his diary speaks of preparations to go to England, and says that news of this proposal was communicated to him by Prince Lvov and Kerensky.

The third merely enumerates the other documents seized by the Soviet : ' The diaries of the Empress and her daughters, notes by the Tsarevich, over 5,000 letters of the correspondence of the Tsar with his wife, with the Kaiser and other sovereigns, with Rasputin and divers official personages, also with his father Alexander III between 1877 and 1894.'

Lastly, the Manchester Guardian (of July 1, 1920) published from its Moscow correspondent a summary of Alexandra's letters to Nicholas II, copies of which (the original shaving disappeared) had been secretly lent to him by a member of the Soviet Government. The extract quoted by him do not shed any new light on her life and character.]

from the murdered Family has *not* been published to this day.

Here is a translation of the official announcement as it was made to the people of Ekaterinburg :—

DECISION

of the Presidium of the Regional Soviet of Workmen's, Peasants' and Redguards' Deputies of the Ural.

In view of the fact that Czecho-Slovak bands are threatening the Red capital of the Urals, Ekaterinburg ; in view also that the fact that the crowned hangman *(palach')* may escape the people's assizes (a Whiteguard plot to capture the whole Romanov family has been discovered), the Presidium of the Regional Soviet in fulfilment of the will of the revolution has decided *(postanovU)* that the former Tsar, Nicholas Romanov, guilty before the people of innumerable sanguinary crimes, shall be shot.

On the night of the 16th to the 17th of July, the decision *(postanov- lenie)* of the Regional Soviet was carried into execution.

The family of Romanov has been transferred from Ekaterinburg to another and safer place.

The Presidium of the Reg. Soviet of W., P., and R. Dep. of the Ural.

DECISION

of the Presidium of the All-Russian Centr. Ex. Com. of 18th July, A.C.

The All-Russian Centr. Ex. Com. of Soviets of W., P., R. and Cossack Deputies in the person of its Presidium approves the action of the Presidium of the Reg. Sov. of the Ural.
The President of the Tsik, Y. Sverdlov.

The discrepancies between the Moscow and the Ekaterinburg announcements are interesting. The date of the Tsik's decision ' was kept secret for two days after its ostensible issue. Asa matter of fact, the whole murder had been directed from Moscow, and even the text of the ' announcement ' had been previously approved by Sverdlov, so it is not surprising that Beloborodov disregarded dates. But the real reason was that the Red chieftains feared the people and, above all, sought to obscure the facts.

* * * * *

I now return to the woods. On the 17th, 18th and 19th large quantities of petrol and sulphuric acid were taken from the city to the iron-pits ; at least 150 gallons of the former and 11 pounds (400 lb.) of the latter. Ekaterinburg being the centre of the platinum industry required large stocks of sulphuric acid to generate the intense [heat necessary for melting this hardest of metals. The Komisar of Supplies was Volkov, ex-passenger in Lenin's German train. He it was who furnished the acid to Yurovsky as his friend Sverdlov's agent. (I remember I wanted to order a platinum ring at a local jeweller's during my stay in the city. He could not carry out the order because there was no sulphuric acid ' since the previous year.')

There is not the shadow of a doubt as to what happened around the iron-pit, as the reader will convince himself after reading the next chapter. Yurovsky's acolytes cut up the bodies, steeped them in petrol, and burned them. The sulphuric acid was used to dissolve the larger bones.

I have spoken of the mock funeral invented by the murderers to deceive public opinion in Russia and abroad. Here is the telegram that appeared in the Press on September 23, 1918 :—

AMSTERDAM, Sept. 22.—According to a telegram from Moscow, the *Izvestua* gives the following description of the obsequies of the ex-Tsar, which, according to newspaper reports, were solemnly carried out by troops of the People's Army (sic) at Ekaterinburg.

' The body of the ex-Tsar, which had been buried in a wood at the place of execution, was exhumed, the grave having been found through information supplied by persons who were acquainted with the circumstances of the execution. The exhumation, says the Soviet journal, took place in the presence of many representatives of the supreme ecclesiastical authorities in Western Siberia, the local clergy, and delegates from the People's Army, Cossacks, and Czecho-SIovaks. The

body was placed in a zinc coffin, encased in a costly covering of Siberian cedar and the coffin was exposed in the Cathedral at Ekaterinburg under a guard of honour composed of the chief commanders of the People's Army. The body will be temporarily buried in a special sarcophagus at Omsk.'

Comment is superfluous. The fourth and last of the ' precautions ' against conviction followed a year later, perhaps' under stress of circumstances, but certainly without any regard for the Soviet's own previous announcements.

Here it is :—

On September 17, 191g, in the House of the Executive Committee of the Soviet at Perm, the Bolshevists brought to trial twenty-eight persons arrested on the accusation of having murdered the Tsar and his family. The following report of the proceedings is taken from the Bolshevist paper *Pravda :—*

' The Revolutionary Tribunal has considered the case of the murder of the late Tsar, Nicholas Romanov, his wife, the Princess of Hesse, their daughters Olga (Tatiana), Marie and Anastasia, and their suite. In all eleven persons were assassinated. Of the twenty-eight persons accused three were members of the Ekaterinburg Soviet—Grusinov, Yakhontov and Malutin ; among the accused were also two women, Maria Apraksina and Elizaveta Mironova. The account of the murder as gathered from the material under the consideration of the Revolutionary Tribunal is as follows :—

'The Tsar and all the members of his *entourage* were shot—no mockery and no cruelties took place. Yakhontov admitted that he had organized the murder in order to throw the discredit of the crime on the Soviet authorities, whose adversary he became after having joined the Socialist revolutionaries of the Left Wing. The plan of murdering the Tsar was conceived during the latter's stay at Tobolsk, but the Tsar was too strictly watched. In Ekaterinburg, when the Czechoslovak troops were approaching the town, the Soviet authorities were panic-stricken to such a degree that it was easy for him to avail himself of his position as chairman of the Extraordinary Commission (for combating counter-revolution) and to give the order to murder the Tsar and his family. Yakhontov admitted that he personally participated in the murder, and that he took upon himself the responsibility for it. He, however, said that he was not responsible for the robbery of the belongings of the Tsar's family. According to his deposition, Tsar Nicholas said before he died, " For the murder of the Tsar Russia will curse the Bolshevists." Grusinov and Malutin stated that they did not know anything about Yakhontov's plans, and only carried out his orders. Yakhontov was found guilty of the murder and sentenced to death. Grusinov, Malutin, Apraksina and Mironova were found guilty of robbery committed on the murdered members of the Tsar's family. They were sentenced to death too. The death sentence was carried out the following day.

' Several objects belonging to the household of the Tsar were discovered with a thief named Kiritshevsky, who stated that these things had been given to him by a man named Sorin, who was the chairman of the Local Extraordinary Commission. At the time of the murder Sorin was the commander of a revolutionary battalion. Sorin was a personal friend of Beloborodov, who also participated in the assassination of the Emperor.'—*Rossia* (Paris), No. 1, December 17, 1919.

[This document has been widely quoted by Jewish organizations to prove that the murder of the Tsar was not carried out by the Bolshevists, and to dispel the nation of a ' racial vendetta.' Apropos of this document a London daily stated (August 18, 1920): 'In the interest of truth it must be here said that the Moscow Central Soviet Government has always disclaimed all participation (sic) in the murder, explaining that its intention was to judge Nicholas II publicly, but not to do away with him secretly in a cellar.']

I have carefully compared the names given above with the list of 164 persons mentioned in the dossier as being implicated or even suspected of having acted any part whatsoever in the tragedy ; I have perused the cognomens of the twenty- four members of the Ekaterinburg Sovdep presidium. There is not one name in the mock trial that even resembles any of them (one cannot possibly identify Yakhontov with Yurovsky) ; the very charge is farcical if one compares this report with the text of the official announcement of the ‘ execution.’ Alone Beloborodov’s name is familiar. He was nominally president of the Ural sovdep at the time of the murders. I explained his real position—that of a mere helot, a thieving workman, kept in office to serve as a screen for the rulers of Sovietdom. After the murders he was ‘ promoted ' to the Tsik, the highest honour of Sovdepia. But they do not stand on ceremony with Russian komisars in the land where Sverdlov rules, and we read of him in the *Pravda* as being stigmatized as (1) a thief’s friend, and (2) a party to the very murder for which he was promoted—the very same appalling crime that Sverdlov had ordained—the stain whereof haunts the chieftains of the Soviet like a Nemesis, so that they utter things without sense.

Besides, the Soviet of Moscow received a lion’s share of the loot! Between July 20 and 22 it was taken from Ipatiev’s house and removed to the Red metropolis. The Bolshevists were fleeing before the advance of the Siberian troops. Yankel Yurovsky, evidently in a hurry to leave Ekaterinburg, took farewell of the death-house on the night of the 19th. His driver thus describes the exodus. That night he had by Yurovsky’s orders called at the *chrezvychaika,* and thence conveyed two young men, one of them a Jew, to Ipatiev’s house, where Yankel was waiting. These youths" went into the house and brought out seven pieces of baggage, among them being a black leather trunk covered with seals. When he had taken his seat in the vehicle, Yurovsky gave his orders to the young men : * Set everything to rights. Leave twelve men on sentry duty and send the remainder to the station.’

The guard at Ipatiev’s house remained till the 23rd, but even after that, on the 24th and 25th some of the Russian ex-warders still visited the house. The Whites entered Ekaterinburg on the 25th, and occupied the house on the following day.

CHAPTER 9: ' MURDER WILL OUT ’

HAVING established, with the evidence of accomplices and of the death-house, the fact that a murder had been committed, the investigating magistrate had to find the bodies or to show conclusively what had become of them; otherwise the whole case remained in doubt. This proved to be a task of immense difficulty.

Suspicions of the truth were rife from the outset. It was known that five motor-lorries had been requisitioned ; that all had been absent several days ; that two had carried petrol, and that one had returned covered with mud and gore. Too many persons were involved to conceal the truth for long ; the peasants who had to come by the forest road from Koptiaki village at once detected something amiss, and quickly drew their conclusions, which turned out to be correct. But ‘ suspicions ’ are not proof. . . .

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Somewhere within the purview of the disused iron-mine ‘ proof ’ was obtainable—on that point there seemed to be no doubt. We took up our residence in the wood—Sokolov, Diterichs, myself and others—and remained there throughout the late spring and early summer of 1919. We descended the mine, found water and ice and a floor. We searched the ground and scoured the woods, living from day to day in alternate hope or despair of settling the gruesome mystery. The woods were full of disused workings, each easily capable **of** concealing what we sought.

Day by day we discovered fresh relics around the pit where the bodies had, we knew, been destroyed. Sokolov tirelessly passed through his searching examination every likely witness ; not a peasant, or *dachnik* (summer resident), or railway servant that had been anywhere near the place escaped him.

Slowly, but surely, the scope of possible error lessened. We had got well away from the versions carefully sown by agents of Yurovsky, who remained in the city, that the bodies had been buried in one place, then re-buried in another.

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One of the witnesses cited in the preliminary inquiry (before Sokolov took charge) had described overhearing a conversation between several Bolshevists about the bodies. The speakers were said to be : Ermakov (whom we know), Mlysh- kin, Kostuzov, Partin, Krivtsov, and Levatnykh. They spoke cynically of feeling the corpses while they were still warm. Levatnykh boasted that he had felt the Tsaritsa and that he ' could now die in peace.' They also spoke of [1] valuables sewn in their clothes.'

The presumable genuineness of these confidences misled the earlier investigator into believing their other statements or perhaps the additions made to them by the spy, who may have been a Red agent—to wit, that the bodies had been buried in various places round the city. This was a ' red ' herring that unfortunately drew the investigator off a hot trail. He did not even go near the wood. Had he done so, he could not have helped discovering easily then what we had such difficulty in finding a year later. His excuse had been that the wood was ' dangerous ' on account of Red bands ; but even if this were so, he could have deputed a less timorous person. A number of self-appointed ' investigators ' took this opportunity of ' gleaning ' relics—perhaps invaluable clues.

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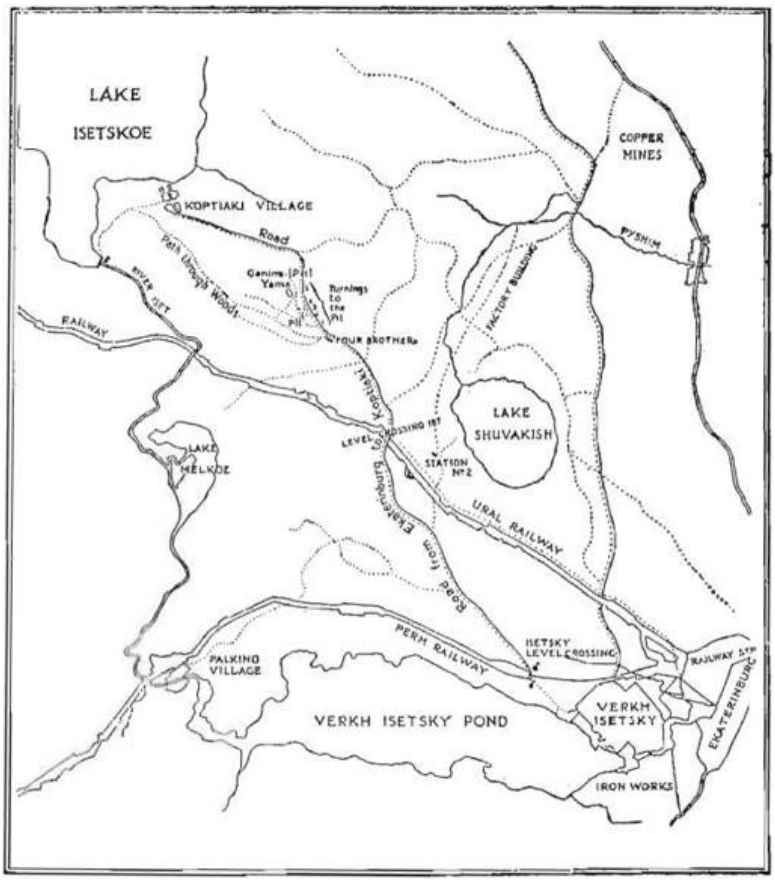

Ekaterinburg and the area to the northwest of the city.

Shown here is the road by which the bodies of the imperial family were taken, and the Ganina mining area where the bodies were burned and then buried. The distance between the city and the Ganina area is about eleven miles.

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Extreme measures had to be taken, nothing less than the complete sifting of the ground within the area of destruction and emptying of the shafts down which any remains could have been thrown. This was a task outside the province of an investigating magistrate. Here we wanted miners with pumping machinery, woodsmen and surveyors ; above all we wanted money.

Thanks to Admiral Koltchak the wherewithal was forthcoming. Indeed, I render him bare justice in saying that without his stanch personal support the investigation would have been overwhelmed long ago by the constant

intrigues of the Omsk Government. He gave the money out of his own funds, because the grant legally authorized by him was ‘ held up ' by his Ministers.

Under the orders and supervision of General Diterichs, a commando of White Guards was formed to carry out the necessary operations. The men were all from the Urals—i.e., miners and peasants versed in woodcraft. Several hundreds of them camped around the Ganina Yama (ditch), situated near a bend in the road to Koptiaki, not a hundred paces from the mine. These men knew what they were working for and put their shoulder to the wheel in all earnestness.

But we had to leave before complete success had crowned their efforts. Diterichs received the summons to save the armies. I went with him. General Domontovich, a very gallant soldier, took command in his place. (He died of typhus during the retreat and was buried in Chita early this year, ‘ Tsarstvie nebesnoie.')

Success came before we had to evacuate Ekaterinburg. The contents of the shaft, extracted with infinite trouble, set at rest for ever any fingering doubt as to the destruction of the bodies. Sokolov had his ‘ proof.'

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Here is the narrative of the investigation. It is a good commentary on the homely saying, ‘ Murder-will out.'

It will be remembered that Ermakov went with the bodies from the death-house. Now Ermakov lived at the Verkh- Isetsk Ironworks, adjoining the city and situated along the route to Koptiaki—i.e., north-east of Ekaterinburg. The Stenbok-Fermor Wood lies a few miles beyond. At the works Ermakov found a detachment of his Red Guards (he was military *komisar)* and a number of conveyances ready harnessed. The whole procession moved off along the Koptiaki road, There is, indeed, no other road in the vicinity practicable for a motor-lorry, Vaganov, the other regicide, mounted his horse and acted as armed escort for the lorry.

Shortly after three o’clock in the morning (solar time) they reached that place where several paths, long disused and grass- grown, turn off to the left towards Ganina Yama. Here they forced a way through the undergrowth, and at one place nearly upset the lorry into a ditch. The mark of the wheels was still visible a year later, and alongside lay the beam which had been brought from the disused mine to jack up the canted lorry.

Around the shafts in this particular place the grass then showed no trace of human passage. Koptiaki villagers did not come that way as a rule. The place had been well selected. But the murderers forgot the habits of the peasant, especially of the haymakers and fisherfolk.

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Nastasia Z. left the village at dawn with her son and daughter-in-law. They approached the gruesome procession just as it was turning off the road. Two horsemen rode up to them. One wore a sailor's uniform. Nastia knew him. He was a Verkh-Isetsk resident—Vaganov. The latter yelled out : ' Turn back ! ' and coming abreast of the peasant cart brandished a revolver at Nastia's head. Frightened, the peasant woman pulled her horse round so sharply that the cart almost upset. Vaganov rode alongside, still pointing his weapon and shouting, ' Don't look round, or I shoot.. . ' After chasing them about a mile towards the village, Vaganov rode back.

The peasants had not been able in the faint light to make out clearly what was behind Vaganov. ' Something long and grey, like a heap,' was all that they could distinguish. The *baba* (peasant woman) concluded that it was the Red Guard army marching to Koptiaki. Urging her horse onward, she immediately roused the whole village, informing the *muzhiks* that the 'army' was coming 'with transport and artillery.' They listened in consternation, alarmed chiefly for their hay crop. An army coming meant fighting in the neighbourhood, and here it was just the time for mowing. The hay might all be lost.

They discussed the matter long and passionately : then some of the boldest among them, headed by an old soldier, set off to investigate. On the road they encountered some Austrian war prisoners who were haymaking, and asked if they had seen the army. They replied that quite early, while they were working on the road, some Russian Cossacks had ridden up and driven them away. The villagers became all the more curious to know what it all meant.

Presently, as they came abreast of the mine, they heard horses neighing. Coming to one of the turnings they saw that the grass had all been crushed and the saplings bent. They were on the point of following this strange trail when out of the wood appeared a horseman armed with sword, revolver, rifle and hand grenades, and asked them what they were doing. The *muzhiks* put on a bold face, although badly frightened, and asked if the *iovarishch*

(comrade) would kindly reassure them, because the whole village was in a state of excitement.

They were graciously informed that there was no cause for alarm. ‘ Our front has been entered at several points. We are merely scouting and practising. Do not be afraid if you hear firing!’ They had a friendly smoke together and then the *muzhiks* departed. They had scarcely gone when a report like the explosion of a hand grenade was heard, and then a short while afterwards another explosion. Soon after their return to the village the same horseman appeared, ‘ to tranquillize them all,’ as he explained.

They were reassured about the haymaking, but now arose another matter. Many of the villagers fished in the large Isetsk lake, which spreads its lovely waters in front of Koptiaki. They had obtained a good haul that night and must take it into the city—it was market day (Wednesday)— and in the hot weather fish does not keep. But the ' Russian Cossacks ’ were inexorable.

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On the city side there was a crowd at the level crossing over the Ural line striving to get to Koptiaki, which being a pretty place attracted many summer residents. These unfortunates, thus ' stranded,’ waited for hours and hours in vain. Some of the railway servants were accommodated with ' benzine ’ from the casks of petrol waiting in reserve. The stream of fisher-folk and the procession of *dachniks* coming and going enabled the investigation to define very precisely the exact limits of the cordon placed round the wood. It pointed in one direction—Ganina Yama. That was the locality that had to be kept from prying eyes.

The peasants were also the first to discover the place where the bodies were destroyed. Their evidence afforded immense, invaluable service to the investigation ; in fact, without them the truth might never have been established owing to the earlier mistakes of the inquiry.

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As soon as the cordon was raised, some of the Koptiaki men hastened to the spot where the horses had neighed and the detonations had been heard. They had thought that the Red Guards were burying arms. The ashes around the pit suggested something else. They started to scrape ; soon they found a

cross belonging to the Empress and the brass buckle of the Tsarevich's belt. Some instinct prompted them to jump to the conclusion that it was' the Tsar's,' although they knew nothing of the murder.

There were eight of the *muzhiks* standing round the pit examining with awe the finds that they had made. ‘ Boys ‘ said one, and he voiced the secret thought of all, ' it is just this, they have been burning Nicholas here. That cross can belong only to him. And that buckle, I tell you, is the Tsarevich's.' They crossed themselves in prayer and silently came away. Needless to say, these honest souls promptly handed over the relics to the White authorities.

* * * * *

On my first visit to the burning-mound, I was attracted by an inscription carved on the giant birch that overhangs one pyre. It read : ‘ T. A. Fesenko,' and the date ' July 11, 1918,' i.e., six days before the murder. A young man sat beside the tree. He was a stranger to me. I took him to be one of Sokolov's agents, especially as outsiders were not encouraged to hover round the iron-pits. I was looking closely at the ground to note where the bodies had been burned and pick up any remaining clues.

The stranger exclaimed: ‘You will have to look very hard ! ' I thought this was a strange remark; the singed and scorched appearance of the ground was, indeed, very noticeable still, although nearly a year had passed. But I encouraged the conversation, suspecting a surprise. The stranger proceeded to give in rather excited tones his conviction that the story of the bonfires and the burning of the bodies was all a myth. ‘ See for yourself ! How could they have destroyed all those bodies and left so few cinders! ' he insisted.

Of course I did not enlighten him as to the petrol and sulphuric acid—which so powerfully aided the work of cremation—or the probable scattering of the ashes around and down the pit. I went straight to Sokolov, who was not far away, and told him what the young man had said. ‘ That must be Fesenko,' was his remark. We walked up to the place. The stranger had resumed his seat beside the birch and appeared to be suffering. Sokolov continued : ‘ Yes, that's the man.' He brought Yurovsky to this place. He is just a young fool of a Bolshevist. Yurovsky took him because he was in charge of this wood, and he was so proud of escorting a komisar that he recorded the visit by carving his name and date on the tree.

‘ Why then is he at large ? ’ I queried.

' Well, the fact is, we hope he may give himself or some of the murderers away. We arrested him and let him go. He haunts this place, and is ever trying to prove that nothing could have happened here ! ’ I felt rather sorry for the poor wretch. Perhaps he had not suspected Yurovsky’s purpose. Yurovsky did not confide such secrets. At all events I gave him the benefit of the doubt, feeling sure that there would be no peace for his tortured mind in this life.

But Sokolov dispelled my sympathy : ‘ The fact is, he touches a sore point. Where are the cinders ? That is the question. We have found too few. They must be hidden somewhere. Now Fesenko could not possibly have discovered this weak point in our armour himself. He has probably been put up to it by the murderers or their spies. That is why we let him wander about.’ However, Fesenko did not give away himself or his associates.

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Not a hundred paces away from the pyres I noticed a little clearing with a comfortable tree-stump. Here one could sit quietly, unseen by the people at the pit's mouth. A pleasant birch and pine grove stretched its fragrant, sonorous maze between this natural arbour and the scene of grisly horror.
Here on this stump Yurovsky had sat while his henchmen performed the last act in the tragedy. Beside this seat we found (a year later) egg-shells—the remains of the fifty eggs ordered by Yurovsky from the nuns, ostensibly for the Romanovs. But this fare had not sufficed for the dainty *komisar*. There were also chicken-bones. There were also torn pages from a treatise on anatomy in German (Yurovsky was only a *felcher ;* he knew little about anatomy). And in order that there should be no doubt as to the origin of these various clues, it so happened that Yurovsky left behind a newspaper published in German at the very period under discussion, full of abuse of the Czechs, accusing them of servile subserviency to the Entente High Command, and treating the war as a slaughter arranged in the interest of capital.

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Reference has been made in preceding chapters to the manner in which the Grand Duchesses had concealed their jewels. Two of their confidential

servitors, Mlles. Tutelberg and Erz- berg, came to our camp in the woods to identify the relics. They had sewn up the bodices, buttons, hats, and other receptacles, and knew precisely what jewels were on the persons of the victims when the murder took place, it being obvious that during their residence in Ipatiev's house none of the prisoners would venture to undo or change these receptacles, as they were under constant observation. The Grand Duchesses Olga, Tatiana and Anastasia each wore double-quilted bodices stuffed with jewels weighing several pounds. Olga carried a satchel round her neck with some special gems and wore several ropes of pearls concealed across her shoulders. The manner in which the concealment had been effected misled the first superficial search of the bodies in the house.

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We now trace the gruesome picture of the cutting up and destruction of the bodies. First of all the clothes were partly removed. The bodices at once aroused attention owing to their weight. The ' ghouls ' began to tear them apart. Their contents were spilled on to the ground, and some of the things rolled into the grass or were trodden into the soil of the mound.

But they did not trouble to denude the corpses completely, and began hacking them in pieces on the clay mound that surrounded the pit's mouth, smiting and severing at the same time some of the valuables that still remained. The large diamonds, which had been camouflaged as buttons, have disappeared with the exception of one. They may have been burned with the clothes of the Grand Duchesses or have been looted. One was found trampled into the clay beside the pyre. Here also was found the Empress's emerald pectoral cross. Some of the bullets dropped out of the bodies during the chopping, others while the limbs were in the flames.

Two pyres were used—one near the shaft, the other near the birch tree. After the cremation had been completed the cinders of both pyres were collected and thrown down the shaft of the mine, which had been previously prepared. Ice remains throughout the summer in deep workings like this one. It had been tested by means of hand grenades, and had then been smashed in order that the cinders, etc., should sink to the bottom of the water. Over them a flooring had been adjusted and anchored.

Innumerable witnesses saw the coming and the going of the lorries. The ' ghouls ' remained in the wood till their task was done. Their shelters and

camps were discovered. They were seen leaving—rolling about in the lorry, like men tired to death.

The flooring had deceived all search in the mine. Only when the operations that I have described above had brought all the core of the shaft to the surface everything was explained. The corpse of little Jemmy lay just under the false floor. It had been preserved by the ice. When good Domontovich made this discovery he immediately telegraphed to us. We all realized that the mystery of the bodies had been solved.

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There were literally hundreds of clues now available. Sokolov busied himself classifying and identifying them. It would be quite impossible to enumerate them all. Several volumes of the dossier are devoted to it. There are the *proces-verbaux* of each ‘ find ’ and each identification. I give here a brief but accurate summary of the clues :—

(1) A large diamond of the finest water, identified as forming a pendant to a necklace belonging to the Empress, valued at 20,000 gold roubles ; slightly touched by fire.
(2) An emerald cross belonging to Alexandra, identified as a present from the Empress Marie, found by experts to be of high workmanship, valued at 2,000 gold roubles ; broken and singed.
(3) A pearl earring untouched, having been thrown with some earth down the shaft, recognized as one of a pair always worn by the Empress, declared to be extremely fine workmanship, valued at 3,000 gold roubles.
(4) Four fragments of a large pearl and settings, declared to be a pair to (3).
(5) Two fragments of emerald declared by experts to have formed part of a large and very fine stone, severed by some hard and heavy object and trampled.
(6) Eleven fragments of emerald.
(7) Thirteen round pearls, all of high quality, as belonging to one rope.
(8) Five fragments of pearl, as belonging to one large gem of finest orient, severed by a heavy weight or trampling.
(9) Another broken pearl of high quality.
(10) Two fine brilliants, declared to have formed part of an ornament of large size.
(11) Portion of a large diamond silver-mounted ornament, bearing traces of heavy blows.

(12 to 21) Precious stones—diamonds, sapphires, rubies, almandine and topazes—and settings, all bearing marks, as experts show, of having been crushed or severed by heavy or cutting objects.

(22 to 28) Articles and appurtenances of apparel, including pieces of cloth identified as parts of the Empress’s skirt, the Tsarevich's military overcoat and Botkin's overcoat ; six sets of corset steels (the Empress would not permit her daughters or the servants to go without corsets, neither would she herself; Demidova wore them also-— that would make exactly six) ; metallic parts of corset suspenders and fragments of silk and elastic ; the Tsarevich's belt buckle ; the Tsar’s belt buckle, both identified ; three paste shoe buckles of first-class workmanship, one identified as the Empress’s, two as belonging to the Grand Duchesses; a large number of buttons, hooks and eyes, etc., some identified as belonging to the Empress’s dress, also military buttons corresponding with the uniforms and caps of the Tsar and Tsare- vich, as made for them by the court tailor in Petrograd. The appurtenances of female costume were such as the court dressmaker used for the family. There were

also parts of apparel such as were used by the tailor who dressed the court servants. The footgear remnants showed strong action by fire. Experts were able, however, to note that they included cork and fine brass screws, both evidences of high- class articles. In their opinion the remnants might well represent seven pairs of boots.

(29 to 41) Exhibits of equal if not greater interest. Among them may be cited : A pocket-case in which the Tsar always carried his wife's portrait; three small ikons worn by the Grand Duchesses, having in each case the face of the saint destroyed as if blows had been aimed at them ; the Empress's jubilee badge of her Lancer regiment ; the gold frame of Botkin's eye-glasses ; a large spectacle glass such as the Empress wore at Tobolsk ; remnants of the Tsarevich's haversack, in which he was accustomed to keep his treasures ; several bottles as used for smelling salts, always carried by the Grand Duchesses, and finally a varied assortment of nails, tinfoil, copper coins, etc., which vastly puzzled Sokolov till somebody, I think Mr. Gibbes, reminded him that Alexis was fond of collecting odds and ends, being of a very saving disposition, like his father.

Then came a number of specially important relics. First, a series of Nagan bullets, some entire but bearing the marks of the rifling, some without the lead core, some in the shape of blobs of molten lead, still unmistakable. Secondly, in the shaft itself, a human finger, two pieces of human skin, and in the clay of the mound many fragments of chopped and sawed human bones, which could still be certified although they had been subjected to the action of fire and perhaps of acid. Experts found that the skin was from a human hand, The finger is described as belonging to a woman of middle age. It is long, slender, and well-shaped, like the Empress's hand.

Near the shaft was found a set of artificial teeth (upper jaw with plate), identified as Dr. Botkin's. The front teeth were deeply encrusted with mire, as if the body had been dragged face downward and thereby the teeth, catching in the hard clay soil, had dragged t plate out of the dead man's mouth.

When the first inspection of the death-house was made- ten days after the murder—it bore all the traces of having been plundered by people who had first slaughtered the owners. The reader will be able to picture it, but his imagination will not come up to the reality. Amidst this scene of pillage and confusion one felt that a careful hand had destroyed everything that could help the investigation; nevertheless, highly - important clues came to light, among them a full list of the Red Guards who had acted as gaolers, the Tsar's private cypher which he had hidden away—as if expecting to be able to reclaim it some day.

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In the death-chamber there was a curious inscription in German, written by a man of some culture—not Yurovsky, therefore, but perhaps one of the two men from the *Chrezvy- chaika* whom he had left in charge of the house on his departure. It was an adaptation of Heine's lines on the fate of Belshazzar :—

Belsatzar ward in selbiger Nacht
Von seinen Knechten umgebracht.

He had omitted the conjunctive ' aber ’ which comes in the poet’s line after ' ward,’ and then, having first written ‘ selbigen,’ had changed it to ‘ seinen,’ feeling perhaps that these modifications were necessary to fit the occasion. Perhaps unconsciously he also converted Belsazar (as Heine spells the name) to Belsatzar. The writer was quoting a Jew whose poem expatiates on the overthrow of a Gentile sovereign who had offended Israel. The Book of Daniel is not so explicit. It says : ' In that night was Belshazzar the King of the Chaldeans slain ’ (Dan. vi. 30). But the author of the inscription wished to make it ‘ clear ’ that ' Belsatzar ' was slain by his own people.

CHAPTER 12: ALL THE ROMANOVS

THE death of Nicholas II and his family did not suffice for the Soviet plan of ' government ' with, or without, Germany. Nothing short of extermination of all the Romanovs could satisfy the enemies of ‘ Belsatzar.’ Whenever the *Tsik* (Central Executive Committee) and the *Chrezvychaika* (Inquisition) laid hands on any of the ex-Tsar’s relatives their fate was sealed. It did not matter where the unfortunate princes might be, or what local authority happened to be ostensibly involved —the *Tsik* and Yankel Sverdlov, Red Jewish Autocrat of All the Russias, directed the disposal of them.

It is quite useless for the apologists of Soviet rule to insinuate that local bodies may have committed excesses without the knowledge and approval of the Centre : in these murders of Grand Dukes and a Grand Duchess—in all eleven persons of the blood Royal—the hand of the Central Government is clearly apparent. Moreover, they were all slain in cold blood, of deliberate purpose ; not like the victims of the holocaust at Perm, because a reign of stark terror had been ordained from Moscow.

It is with mind and hand still a-tremble after reciting the horrors of the cellar and the woods of Ekaterinburg that I take up this tale of woe, all the more pitiful on account of the utter absence of any pretext for the crimes—just sordid murder unrelieved by any shadow of political expediency or provocation.

First, I take the case of the Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovich ; he ‘ disappeared ’ before the others—about a month before the Tsar—and he was the ostensible Heir, although he had formally resigned his rights to the people. I have collected all the materials concerning his last days in Perm.

The Tsar’s brother had remained at Gachina, his usual residence, during the early months of Bolshevist rule. There he was arrested in March, 1918, and sent into exile. His secretary, Nicholas Nikolaievich Johnson, and the former Chief of the Gendarmerie at Gachina, Colonel Znamerovsky, were arrested at the same time and transported together with him, guarded by Letts. Perm was their destination, and in that city they resided for the next two months.

Apart from being under surveillance, the exiles enjoyed comparative freedom. The Grand Duke took his walks with his secretary. Although suffering from a chronic malady (gastral ulcers) which required constant

exercise and a special diet, he had no cause to complain of his health while in Perm. The fact was many people sent him dainties, such as sterlets freshly caught out of the Kama, so that his rooms at the Korolevskie Nomera (King's Inn) were always full of provisions. He felt so well that he seldom had recourse to the medicine for stilling the terrible pains that he suffered during acute attacks of the malady.

Popularity has its drawbacks. The people of Perm did not realize that their attentions to the exile might arouse suspicion among his Red enemies. When things came to such a pass that the Tsar's brother found himself running the gauntlet of popular ovations, it became necessary to avoid too frequent appearances in the streets. Znamerovsky warned the Grand Duke that the Reds at the suburban Motoviliha arsenal were beginning to grow restive and openly agitating against the liberty allowed to the exiles. So thereafter the familiar figure of Michael Alexandrovich in his shabby grey suit and top-boots was seen no more, and he took his exercise under the cover of darkness.

The Grand Duke had left his wife and children at Gachina. Countess Brasova (his morganatic spouse) came to visit her husband in the middle of May. Madame Znamerovskaia had also arrived in Perm. It was a rash step. Countess Brasova had much difficulty in getting away; in fact it was only managed by a stratagem. The komisars were told that if they interfered the matter would be referred to Moscow. This frightened them.

Reaching Moscow on May 22 or 23, Countess Brasova decided to take a still bolder step to save her husband. Conscious of his complete aloofness from politics, she imagined that personal intercession with the Red chieftains would move them to let him go. Of course it was an illusion excusable only in a distracted wife. I mention it because Lenin himself intervened in the matter. It was the lofty idealist of Soviet- dom, that absolutely refused to permit the departure of Michael and thereby assumed the responsibility of what happened.

Madame Znamerovskaia did not leave Perm. She was there when her husband was shot and later shared his fate. But I am anticipating.

Unbeknown to any member of the family or even to N. N. Johnson, Colonel Znamerovsky had conceived a plan of escape which he intended to put into practice, fearing that the Motoviliha workmen might be goaded into violence. I am in possession of the details of tins plan, and I can state most

positively—in the light of subsequent events—that it was not carried out, nor even attempted.

On June 13 a telegram reached Gachina from Perm, announcing that ‘ our general favourite and Johnny has been removed by whom and whither unknown.' This message was supposed to have come from Znamerovsky—it could have come only from him. The first feeling was one of unmixed joy ; then doubts began to arise, and no small anxiety as to the probable repression that would at once fall upon the household at Gachina. Surely enough, soon afterwards Countess Erasova was arrested by Uritsky, the blood-stained Komisar of Petrograd, who himself was assassinated two months later by another Jew. After innumerable tribulations, she managed to escape with her children out of Russia.

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What had happened in Perm ? *A* dispatch from Mr. Alston, the British Acting High Commissioner, reported from Vladivostok, February 13, 1919 : ‘ Mr. T. has just arrived here. . . . When at Perm he says he lived in the same hotel with Grand Duke Michael and Mr. Johnson, his secretary, who was a Russian. At 2 a.m. on or about June 16 he saw four of the Perm militzia or police take them off, and he is convinced that they were killed.’

Later, it became possible to obtain the evidence of eye-witnesses, which corroborated and amplified Mr. Alston’s dispatch. The Grand Duke had two servants with him in Perm, Borunov and Chelyshev. They lived in an adjoining room. Mr. Johnson lived upstairs. Chelyshev escaped and gave the following version :—

At about the date above mentioned (June 12 to 16—- he was hazy on this point) he was asleep one night when three men in soldiers’ dress, fully armed, entered his room, woke him up and roughly ordered him to lead them to Michael Romanov. In vain he protested that the Grand Duke was asleep. They threatened him with the Chrezvychaika. He had to comply. He first woke Mr. Johnson. Then he led the way to the Grand Duke's room. He was asleep. Chelyshev roused him and explained the reason. The Grand Duke looked at the armed men.

One of them said : ‘ We have orders to take you—orders from the Sovdep.'

[Abbreviation of Soviet defiutatov (Council of Deputies).]

The Grand Duke replied : ‘ I shall not come unless you show me a paper.’ One of the men then stepped forward and, laying his hand roughly on the Grand Duke’s shoulder, exclaimed : ' Oh ! these Romanovs I We are fed up with you all ! ’

Realizing that resistance was futile, the Grand Duke rose and dressed himself. Mr. Johnson had also meanwhile made himself ready, and insisted that the men should take him away as well. After some argument, they agreed. Chelyshev declares that he also asked to be taken, but that the men refused.

As the soldiers and their two prisoners were going out of the room, Chelyshev remembered about the medicine, and, grasping the bottle, followed, calling out : ' Please, your Highness, take it with you.’ He knew that without his medicine the Grand Duke might be subjected to great and needless suffering. The soldiers roughly pushed him aside and, making some brutal remark about the Imperial Family, led the prisoners away. From that moment they were lost to view. Many stories of Michael’s escape and of his having been seen at Omsk, at Semipalatinsk, at Chita, at Harbin, etc., have been successively disproved.

Against the version of an escape there are the strongest evidences. The Grand Duke would never have been a part to any attempt to evade his gaolers, knowing full well that both the Tsar-—for whom his loyalty and affection were proverbial —and his own family would suffer for him. It may be objected that he was removed against his will by friends in disguise ; but this theory cannot explain away their refusal to allow him to take with him a remedy necessary to his health and perhaps to his life. There had been plots to procure his escape—so **I** have reason to believe ; but in every case the plans had been betrayed. Colonel Znamerovsky knew this. He would trust nobody with his plan, but obviously it miscarried, for he was himself to go with Michael, and we know that instead of that he was murdered. The shooting of Znamerovsky followed close upon the Grand Duke's disappearance.

Chelyshev afterwards professed confidence in his master's escape, but at the time he had no such illusion. In fact, he was convinced then that the Grand Duke had been trapped, for when he had had time to recover from his surprise, he went to the local Soviet and complained that the Grand Duke had been kidnapped. He relates that no attention was paid to him at

first, but that later some semblance of a search was made and quickly dropped.

Regarding the ultimate disposal of the two prisoners, stories circulate just as numerous and varied as the stories of their escape. I need not cite them. It suffices that the Grand Duke Michael, gentlest of men, to whom all thought of power and even of ambition was repugnant, disappeared to be seen no more.

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Perm and its vicinity was destined to witness other tragedies full of horror. Many other members of the Romanov family had been interned there, including (1) the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, sainted sister of the Empress, venerated by grateful Muscovites while Alexandra was disliked ; (2) the Grand Duke Sergius Mikhailovich, former Master of the Ordnance, and quite remote from politics; (3) Prince Igor ; (4) Prince Ioan ; (5) Prince Constantine, all three brilliant young men, the sons of the late Grand Duke Constantine Constantinovich, none of them concerned with political matters ; and (6) Prince Vladimir Pavlovich Palei, son of the Grand Duke Paul and stepbrother of the Grand Duke Dmitri Pavlovich. This youth of seventeen had given promise of being one of the world’s greatest poets.

Prince Ioan was married to Princess Elena of Serbia, who had come to the Urals to share her husband's exile. She had been persuaded to go to her country, the Bolshevists hesitating to incarcerate her, and she was at Ekaterinburg when, towards the end of June, she heard that Prince Ioan and the other captives had been put on starvation rations. She decided, come what might, not to leave him behind. Thereupon the Bolshevists arrested her. She was in the prison at Ekaterinburg when the Tsar and his family were murdered. In the same prison were some people who had followed the Imperial household into captivity : young Countess Anastasia Henri- kova, Mlle. Schneider, the Erpperor’s valet Volkov. (Prince Dolgoruky and General Tatishchev had ' disappeared ’ earlier.) Of course, none of them knew anything about the awful happenings in Ipatiev’s house.

When the Jewish murderers and their accomplices, the German-Magyar ‘Letts,’ had taken wing before the advance of the Whites, these prisoners were sent to Perm for future disposal, while they themselves had hurried westward, having helped to accomplish the hellish design of the Jew fiend Yankel Sverdlov—to exterminate ' all the Romanovs.’ Orders had already

preceded them to Perm, and the design had been fully accomplished there. The murder of the Romanovs of Perm took place exactly twenty-four hours after the murder of the family in Ekaterinburg.

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Here are the bare facts of this new butchery. The six Romanov prisoners above mentioned, with the Grand Duchess's companion, the nun Varvara, and S. M. Remes, manager for the princes, were interned in the village school of Alapaevsk, a place in the environs of Perm.

On the night of July 17 (1918) their warders came to tell them the story that Yurovsky had retailed to the Tsar : that there was danger for them, that the enemy (i.e., the Czechoslovaks) were approaching, and that in the interest of their personal safety they would be removed. It was even confided to them whither they were going, namely, to the Siniachikhin Works. All unsuspicious, they (also) at once complied. The programme of the murder was here somewhat different. It was not convenient to carry it out on the premises. The party took their seats in the native *korobs* (a small tarantass) and were driven north.

When twelve versts (eight miles) out the caravan halted in a wood which contained a number of disused iron ore mines —one sees the similarity of detail in the murderers' plan— and here the unfortunates were slain and their bodies thrown down the shafts.

It was a much cruder performance than that of Ekaterinburg. The actual murderers here were simply Russian criminals, escaped convicts who ' worked ' for the Chrezvychaika, the Red Inquisition. They just slaughtered the victims and got rid of the bodies without so much as rifling their pockets.

Meanwhile at the school certain ' precautions ' were, as usual, taken. A pretended ' escape ' was staged. The school building and its approaches were * faked ' to show evidence of combat between the Red Guards and pretended White Guards, and to give verisimilitude to the performance they took a peasant who happened to be locked up in the local gaol, murdered him and placed his dead body in the school to represent the White ' bandits.'

Mr. Preston, the Consul, telegraphed from Ekaterinburg, October 28,1918, that on the retaking of Alapaevsk by the White troops on September 28, the corpses of the Romanov Princes, the Grand Duchess and

their attendants were found sufficiently preserved to be recognized, and that they were buried in the presence of a great concourse of people.

The discovery had been made thanks to the resource of a local police agent, whose name I do not give for special reasons. *Post-mortem* examination showed that the victims had been bludgeoned to death but must have undergone a prolonged agony before they died. The Grand Duke Sergius was shot through the head, perhaps to put him out of his misery; for the murderers were just butchers who did not seek to torture their victims. There was no refinement of cruelty about them. They were only Russians. It is not true that they threw their victims down the shaft before life was extinct. The autopsy has dispelled that legend. The murderers even exploded hand grenades down the shaft, probably to make assurance doubly sure.

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The investigation has clearly established the authorship of these murders. The orders came from Moscow through the same channels that had been used in the murder of the Tsar —namely, from the Jew Sverdlov to the Jew Goloshchekin, and, as usual, the Russian workman Beloborodov acted as the dummy president of the Ekaterinburg Soviet board- the channel through which Moscow acted in the Urals. These orders were carried out by the leading komisars of Pern among them being the Komisar of Justice Soloviev.

As in the case of the murder at Ekaterinburg, the Bolshevist at Perm followed up their traitorous crime by announcing that there had been a conspiracy. The world was told that the Princes had been kidnapped by bands of White Guards. (When the Whites had to evacuate Perm, General Diterichs arranged to have the bodies of the martyred Princes removed eastward. They rest in a place of safety—at the Russian Cathedral in Peking.)

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More than half a year later a crime equally abominable was perpetrated at Petrograd. The victims were the Grand Dukes Paul Alexandrovich, Dmitri Constantinovich, Nicholas Mik hailovich (the historian), and George Mikhailovich. They had been imprisoned for some time without any charge

being preferred against them. On January 29, 1919, they were removed to the Fortress of SS. Peter and Paul, and there **on** the same day without any investigation or form of trial they were ' killed by Red Guards with revolvers '—such is the trite information that is available. But the crime of Ekaterinburg and the slaughter of Alapaevsk give a clue as to the authorship of this atrocity. The last of the Romanovs within the power of the Jew-ruled Soviet had passed away. Perhaps, some day, N. A. Sokolov will be able to investigate the crime of Petrograd.

* * * * *

We now approach the end of this long martyrology. The murders of which I am about to speak form part of the Red Terror ordained by the Soviet to avenge the murder of Uritsky and the attempt on Lenin, which took place about a month after the crime of Ekaterinburg.

I referred above to the transfer of certain prisoners from that city to Perm. Volkov, the Tsar's valet, has deposed that altogether thirty-six persons travelled in the prison train. Among them were Countess Henrikova, Mlle. Schneider, and Princess Elena. They all found themselves interned in the same prison in Perm. Here Volkov met Chelyshev, who had also been locked up, and from him heard the account of the abduction of the Grand Duke Michael. They saw the Princess leave. After great difficulty the Serbian Government had managed to rescue her. She did not, of course, know that her husband had been murdered. She thought he had escaped, and went away willingly enough this time.

The Terror had been proclaimed on September 1, 1918. The official *Izvestiya* declared that the ‘ proletariat (sic) will reply . . . in a manner that will make the whole *bourgeoisie* shudder with horror.’ The *Krasnaia.* (Red) *Gazeta* announced: ‘ We will kill our enemies in scores of hundreds. . . . Let them drown themselves in their own blood.’

[The chrezvychaika of Petrograd, presided over by the Jew Peters, proclaimed that ‘ the criminal hand of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, directed by the Anglo-French, has dared to fire at the leader of the working classes. . . . This crime will be answered by mass terror . . . representatives of capital will be sent to forced labour . . . counter-revolutionaries will be exterminated. . . .’ Petrovsky, Komisar for Interior, telegraphed all local Soviets, reproving them for ' the extraordinarily insignificant number of serious repressions (the hateladen Jew could not abide the innate kindliness of the Russians) and mass shootings of White Guards and bourgeoisie.’ Petrovsky denounced these ‘ grandmotherly ' methods. He ordained that ' all Right Socialist-Revolutionaries must be immediately arrested. Considerable numbers of hostages must be taken from bourgeoisie and former officers. At

the slightest attempt at resistance, or the slightest movement in White Guard circles, mass shootings of hostages must be immediately employed. Indecisive and irresolute action in this matter on the part of local Soviets will be severely dealt with.' Zinoviev (Appelbaum), one of the cultured leaders of Sovietdom, then declared that ninety out of too millions of tire population must be 'won over,' but 'as for the rest, we have nothing to say to them ; they must be annihilated.']

' On the night of September 3 '—I am quoting Volkov— ' we were led out of the prison, eight of us. There were Countess Henrikova, Mlle. Schneider, and Mme. Znamerov- skaia, myself, and four others. We were surrounded by twenty- two armed guards, part Letts, part Magyars.

' We had been told that we were to be transferred to another prison ; we carried our small possessions. When we saw that they were leading us out of the town, we realized that our last hour had come. It was terribly hard on the ladies. They dragged themselves along with difficulty in the heavy mud. After several miles, we came to a corduroy road with swamps on either side.' (It was a sewage farm.) ' Some of our guards suddenly began offering to carry our bags. I knew that meant that they were going to shoot us directly, so each one wanted to secure his booty beforehand. It was now or never. While they were wrangling over the spoils I made a dash for it.'

Volkov leapt the ditch and was scuttling across the slimy waste when the Magyaro-Letts opened fire. He fell just as the first shot rang out and remained lying. They thought he was dead and moved on. He then made another dash, and finally got away. After wandering about for forty-three days, he came into the White zone and was saved.

The frightfully mangled remains of Countess Henrikova and Mlle. Schneider were discovered by us in the summer of last year and committed to the grave in Perm, in full view of the prison windows where they had been fellow prisoners of Princess Elena.

' Comrade ' Petrovsky's accusations were undeserved in Perm. The Red Terror ran a full stream of blood in that region. The peasants, being regarded by Bolshevists as the worst kind of *bourgeoisie,* provided the bulk of the ' scores of hundreds ' of victims. For details of these horrors I would refer the reader to the White Book on Bolshevism issued in April, 1919.

Respecting Count Tatishchev and Prince Dolgoruky, nothing is known as to the manner of their death. According to Volkov, who was in prison with him in Ekaterinburg, Tatishchev was summoned to the office on or about June 8, and was there informed that, by order of the Soviet, he was to be deported to the province of Ufa. He was thereupon taken away from the prison and seen no more.

Prince Dolgoruky remained some time in the Ekaterinburg House of Detention. He was frequently in communication with the worthy Mr. Preston, trying to relieve the sufferings of the captives in Ipatiev's house. Probably this hastened his end. We know that the British Consul was threatened with death if he ' interfered ' any more. Dolgoruky disappeared like his senior, the Count. Their memories, like the memories of Henrikova and Schneider, will live through the ages as of those who have been ' faithful unto death.'

CHAPTER 13: THE JACKALS

AROUND the tigers of the Soviet and their feasts of blood hovered the jackals, singly, in twos and threes, and in packs, waiting to snatch some morsel.

It would be impossible to mention all the sorry scavengers that thronged around the Romanovs before and after their martyrdom. I refer only to such of them that affected, one way or another, the course of the tragedy and its investigation.

Chronologically I record the name of Soloviev first because he figures in the dossier as an actor while the Family was still at Tobolsk. The depositions of numerous witnesses substantiated by Soloviev himself show that he was receiving a salary of Rs.40,000 (nominally, £4,000) from a banker named X - (well known in Petrograd and reputed to be a Jew), who is said to have acted for the Germans during the war, having the disbursement of secret funds from Berlin in his hands.

Having married a daughter of Rasputin, named Matrena, after the ' saint's ' death, and formed a connexion with Anna Vyrubova, then at liberty in the Red capital, and with other friends of Grishka, this young man, an ex-officer in the Russian army and former A.D.C. to Guchkov, started on a ' mission ' to Siberia. Ostensibly he went to his wife's home. His own explanation is that he was interested in the fisheries of the Ob ; also that he took money and comforts to Tobolsk to the Imperial Family from their friends in Petrograd. He deposes that he handed the money to the priest Vasiliev, also the presents. He accuses the priest of appropriating the one and the other. (The priest makes counter-charges.)

There appears to be reason to believe that the Empress knew of this ' mission,' and, retaining to the very end all her illusions regarding Grishka and Anna, gave her confidence to Soloviev as his son-in-law and the associate of Vyrubova. How he repaid this confidence will be seen.

X-'s agent naturally kept him and the Germans informed as to all the happenings at Tobolsk, but one may be quite sure that he did not stop there. Information given to the Germans meant, of course, its communication, when Berlin so desired, to the Bolsheviks, its servants. Is it surprising in these circumstances that each of the four separate and independent organizations formed to release the Imperial exiles was betrayed before

anything could be attempted ?— for the Solovievs were many and X-'s tentacles far-reaching.

It could not be a coincidence that officers who met Soloviev in Tiumen were arrested by the Reds and ' disappeared.' Two such cases are recorded in the dossier. It is certainly more than a coincidence that before and after the fall of the Kolchak Government he was in mysterious association with persons who were strongly suspected of being German agents, and could give no satisfactory account of the source of his income, since he had been cut off from X-'s supplies.

N. A. Sokolov found him and Matrena at Chita, enjoying the confidence and support of Maria Mihailovna, the so-called ' Queen of Diamonds,' who presided over the destinies of the Ataman's household and had a decided finger in the TransBaikalian pie. The ' Queen ' bore a striking likeness to a certain Jewess who had spied on the Russian South-Western front in the days of the war. She came in person to release the Solovievs from the House of Detention to which they had been relegated by Sokolov's legal order. Sokolov himself had to flee from Orita to avoid worse consequences.

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The priest Vasiliev was of another stamp. His antecedents should have dispensed him from ecclesiastical office. He had killed the sexton of the church where he had previously served. The plea of accident of which he availed himself to secure a normal punishment of [1] penitence ' could not engender a proper recognition of his responsibilities. The man was a self-seeker ; he saw in the captivity of the Romanovs an opportunity to advance his own and his son's interests. He indulged in all manner of demonstrations of loyalty—bell-ringing and prayers—without regard to their effect upon the captives and their gaolers. As a matter of fact, they did much harm to the family. The accusation brought against him by Soloviev appears to be borne out in part by the discovery of a certain quantity of articles belonging to the Imperial Family in his (Vasiliev's) house.

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The Czech pharmacist Gaida, commanding their rearguard when they were stopped by orders from Berlin and Moscow, who afterwards entered the service of the Omsk Government, played a sorry part in the

investigation of the Tsar's murder. Immediately after the occupation of Ekaterinburg by the Whites, Gaida requisitioned Ipatiev's house for his personal use and took the room in which the Tsar and his wife had lived for himself. The judiciary begged him not to do so explaining that it was most necessary that the house should not be disturbed in the interests of justice. They were brushed aside. Gaida threatened violence if they did not leave him alone. They drew up a *proces-verbal* on the matter. It is in the dossier.

In the light of this incident it is rather strange to read the Red proclamations denouncing the Czecho-Slovaks as the agents of the counter-revolution, who were coming to deliver Nicholas Romanov. Gaida's complete indifference to the Romanovs and their fate was shared by his countrymen, and it is extremely doubtful if they would have behaved better towards the Romanovs than they did afterwards to Kolchak.

[Admiral Kolchak was surrendered by the Czechs to the Reds at Irkutsk while he was travelling eastward in February, 1920, underthe protection of the Allied flags. The order to surrender him was countersigned by the Czech 'commander-in chief.' Admiral Kolchak was shot soon afterwards in a peculiarly cruel manner.]

Among the spies and officers employed by Gaida some are known to have been Bolshevist agents. One of the officials of his intelligence branch proved to be the Nikolsky who had behaved so brutally to the exiles at Tobolsk, and was afterwards president of the local Soviet. When the Russian officers at Ekaterinburg heard of his previous exploits, they killed him, without giving the investigation an opportunity to obtain his deposition.

Another hostile Czech was a certain Zaifiek, a former Austrian officer, who was in charge of an important section of the Intelligence Department. When the former Extraordinary Komisar Yakovlev, repenting of the part he had played in the removal of the Tsar from Tobolsk, came over to the Whites and applied to General Shenik for service, he happened to come into the hands of Zaicek, who, being a traitor and a spy, took measures to have Yakovlev sent away, perhaps knowing that he had been in the confidence of Mirbach and might give the whole German show away.

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The Omsk Government, largely composed of Socialist- Revolutionaries, gave little encouragement to the investigation. To them the murder of the

ex-Tsar appeared to be a matter of quite inferior interest. The investigating magistrate, being in straits for money, applied to the Governor-General of the Ural, a mining engineer named P., for a sum of 100 roubles (then worth about *£1)* to provide the monthly stipend of a typist. Being a member of the S. R. party, this high official refused, explaining that in his opinion no inquiry was needed, as it was clearly ‘ a simple case of the shooting of hostages,' too common to worry about.

When, at a later stage, this person was making his way eastward in a luxurious car stuffed with ' loot,’ the officers of Ataman Semenov searched it, found several millions of Romanov roubles (the currency of the old regime, worth even now about 250 to the £), besides gold and platinum, and shot him on the spot as a ‘ speculator.’

The investigating magistrate was able to discover the whereabouts of a noted Bolshevist named Ilmer, who had come to Siberia secretly with an important mission from Moscow. He communicated with the Secret Service at Omsk, requesting that an officer should be sent to apprehend Ilmer. But Ilmer did not turn up. It was ascertained that the Secret Service, instead of sending the officer, had sent a telegram, with the result that Ilmer escaped.

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Perhaps the worst enemies of the investigation were in the Ministry of Justice. It being a cardinal maxim of the Kolchak Government that it wielded supreme authority over the Russian dominions pending the convocation of a ' Constituent Assembly,’ the blessed formula consecrated by advanced politicians and adopted as a *sine qua non* by the powers of the Entente, the Minister of Justice had to be a Socialist- Revolutionary. M. Starynkevich, a lawyer who had bet exiled by the former regime, fulfilled the ' necessary requirements.

He persistently and deliberately declined to treat the Tsar murder as anything more than an ordinary penal offence and would not appoint a special investigator. The inquiry was therefore conducted casually. A member of the Tribunal of Ekaterinburg, without special training in criminal investigation, had the case in hand. (Curiously enough, he was of Jewish extraction.) The blunders, or worse, then committed are directly ascribable to Starynkevich.

It was only by direct and categorical orders from the Supreme Ruler (Admiral Kolchak) that the appointment of a special investigator (N. A.

Sokolov) was assured. But realizing that renewed and constant attempts would be made to upset the investigation, Kolchak gave Sokolov a special warrant of appointment and otherwise supported him in his work. It was very necessary, for all that Omsk would allow him for expenses was Rs.4.50 per diem (about *6d.),* and when he arrived in Ekaterinburg he had exactly 165 Siberian roubles (then about £2) in his possession for all outlays.

Bad enough, this was nothing to what came after. The investigation was frequently embarrassed by the excessive zeal of amateur Sherlocks or Pushfuls. In some cases their thirst for information could not be ignored, as they claimed to make their demands from a high personage friendly to the Omsk Government. In February of last year, Sokolov prepared a confidential report for transmission abroad and handed it to Admiral Kolchak. The next morning it appeared in full in the local organ of the Socialist-Revolutionary party. The paper was suppressed a few hours later, but of course the mischief had been done. The murderers knew exactly how the investigation stood. All the names of the accused and witnesses were printed in full for the whole world to read, and there also was the name of the investigator (Sokolov), whose appointment had been so distasteful to Starynkevich, practically inviting anybody to come and kill him. (A summary of the disclosed information was published in *The Times* of February 18, 1919.)

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This same Starynkevich, now an ex-Minister, has lately come out in another ‘ disclosure.’ He has informed the representatives of Jewry that not a single Jew was concerned in the murder of the Imperial Family. It seems almost incredible, but here is the document; it is a letter from the Secretary of the Joint Foreign Committee of the Jewish Board of Deputies and the Anglo-Jewish Association, giving details of an interview with M. Starynkevich.

It says : ' the Minister, in a statement given to me written down with his own hand, and herewith literally translated, declares that:—

' On the strength of the data of the preliminary inquiry, the course of which was reported to me every week by the Attorney-General, I can certify that, among the number of persons proved by the data of the preliminary inquiry to have been guilty of the assassination of the late Emperor Nicholas II and of his family, there was not any person of Jewish descent.’

The letter proceeds :—

‘ I put to him the question as to how he explains the fact of General Knox having sent to the British War Office a report to the contrary. M. Starynkevich . . . said that the Russian military circles had vehemently asserted from the very outset that the assassination of the Tsar’s family was the handiwork of the Jews, and that this point must be established by the inquiry. They started an investigation of their own, and insisted on the whole course of the inquiry being left to themselves.

' The Minister of Justice had to contend with great difficulties before he obtained that the inquiry should be carried out by the regular organs of his department. Even the impartial investigation did not cease to be hampered by the interference of the military. Thus, -when the First Examining Magistrate, Sergeiev, had failed to discover any trace of Jewish participation in the crime, these military circles vociferously protested against him and insinuated that M. Sergeiev was a Jew himself. This campaign was so violent and persistent that the Minister of Justice had to discharge M. Sergeiev from the case and to entrust the further proceedings to another examining magistrate. His successor was likewise unable to discover any trace of Jewish participation in the murder of the Tsar’s family.’

I have given this ‘ statement ’ in full to prevent any subsequent ' misapprehensions.’ M. Starynkevich’s record is known to the reader. He shows himself in his written ' denial to be a quibbler. The degree of ' guilt ’ of the implicated persons had not been fully established in the initial stages of the inquiry, but they were known to be implicated and known to be Jews. The names of Yurovsky, Goloshcheldn, Safarov, Volkov are in Sergeiev’s own *proc&s-verbaux,* and they were perfectly known by him to be Jews.

It was only natural that the maintenance of Sergeiev reputed to be of Jewish descent at the head of the investigation alarmed all who were concerned with the establishment of the truth, but M. Starynkevich carefully conceals another still more important reason for this anxiety. Sergeiev was a judge, not an investigating magistrate. He had been deputed to take over the conduct of the investigation from the first magistrate (Nametkin) in the early days of August, 1918, and, contrary to law and to the rules of criminal investigation in Russia as well as in other countries, had continued to conduct the inquiry after the formation of the government at Omsk and despite the fact that fully qualified investigating magistrates were available.

The persistent refusal of the Minister to relieve Sergeiev could be understood only in one sense. Not till February of the following year did Starynkevich at last comply with the law, but even then it was not by his own initiative.

Soon afterwards he himself had to leave. Hence his complete ignorance of the subsequent course of the investigation. His slurs upon the military are

beneath contempt. But Sokolov and the dossier are here to answer him on this and any other points, if necessary.

CHAPTER 14: BY ORDER OF THE ' TSIK ’

THE murderers of the Romanovs have been unmasked in the preceding chapters, but not all of them. The parts played by Yurovsky and Goloshchekin are apparent. They were confidential agents of Yankel Sverdlov, the Red Tsar. Other very important personages, although they remained in the background, were Komisars Safarov, Voikov and Syromolotov. They occupied prominent positions in the Regional Government of the Ural, as members of the Presidium or Board of the Sovdep (Council of Deputies).

This Board it was that ' decided ’ that the Romanov family should be shot. The local Council, i.e. the ‘ representatives of the people,’ knew nothing, at the time, of the execution. Had they been consulted, of course the whole city would have learned about it. We know that they first heard of it on the fourth day.

I give here a complete list of the names or cognomens of the so-called ' judges ’ : (i) Beloborodov, (2) Goloshchekin, (3) Sakovich, (4) Voikov, (5) Bykov, (6) Syromolotov, (7) Safarov, (8) Ukraintsev, (9) Kiselev, (10) Vainer, (11) Hotimsky, (12) Vorobiev, (13) Andronikov, (14) Andreiev, (15) Simashko, (16) Avdeiev, (17) Kariakin, (18) Zhilinsky, (19) Chufarov, (20) Yurovsky, (21) Efremov, (22) Anuchin. The above formed the Oblastnoy Sovdep (Regional Council of Deputies), i.e., the representatives for the whole of the Ural region.

The Board was composed of five members, Beloborodov, the Russian ' dummy ’ as president, and Goloshchekin, Safarov, Voikov and Syromolotov, all four Jews, as members. The *Chrszvychaika* (Inquisition) was ' run ’ by Goloshchekin, Yurovsky, Efremov, Chustkevich and three other Jews.

These ‘ inner circles ’ are the men who ‘ tried ’ the Tsar and condemned him to death, in other words, assumed the duty of carrying out Sverdlov's orders. They sent ' compromising ’ documents to Moscow afterwards : letters alleged to have been surreptitiously exchanged between the Tsar and officers outside. They are clumsy forgeries. One of them alludes to ' five windows ’ facing the square as possible means of escape, whereas the Tsar’s quarters comprised only two windows on that side, and if the alleged plotters had succeeded in penetrating the double barriers, scaling the house

and entering as directed, they would have plumped into a veritable hornet's nest. Besides, how could they have hoped to escape the machine-gunner on the roof.

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This mockery of a trial has been perpetuated by the ' fakes ' of sensation-seekers and imaginative writers. One enterprising foreigner cabled thousands of words from Ekaterinburg not long after the murder, describing the aeroplanes that hovered over the city—presumably to carry off the Tsar — and the dropping of bombs, etc., all of which was, of course, rank nonsense ; but he also gave a wonderful account by ' the Tsar's faithful servant,' whose name had never been heard of, who told with a wealth of detail how the Tsar was fetched away ' for trial ' and how he came back and took an affecting leave of his wife and children before being shot all alone. . . . There are pages and pages of this stuff, and it is all absolute twaddle, but none the less mischievous.

There was no trial of any sort whatsoever. No trial— therefore no verdicts, judgments or other such-like formulae, and no reading of any papers to the Tsar before the family was sent to its last account. This so-called * paper ' is an invention inspired by the murderers to fit in with the Moscow story of an intended trial. The only ' paper ' concocted by the murderers was the ' Decision ' as to the ' execution.' At the Soviet Headquarters in Ekaterinburg numerous drafts of this document were afterwards discovered and figure in the dossier. They show how troubled the murderers were to invent a lie for open approval by Moscow.

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Why was the Tsar moved from Tobolsk, and why was he not brought to Moscow, as Yakovlev had been instructed ? It is absurd on the face of it to hint that the Ural Regional Sovdep was overriding the decisions of Moscow. We have just seen that the virtual rulers of the Ural were Yankel Sverdlov's fellow-Jews and associates, even subordinates.

An answer is offered by the Soviet organ of May 4, 1918. It explains that it was ' owing to alleged indications of efforts being made by local peasants and by Monarchist groups to promote escape.' We trace here the handiwork of Soloviev and Vasiliev. And it adds : ' The regional Soviet of the Urals are

charged with surveillance over the Imperial Family.' *(The Times,* May 6, 1918.)

But while this answer goes a certain way and definitely involves the responsibility of the Moscow Government for all that happened in the Urals, it by no means tells the whole truth. The inside history of Yakovlev's mission has been explained. Yakovlev was the agent of Sverdlov. But Sverdlov as president of the Tsik

[Even this high body (the Red Cabinet of Ministers) was, like all Soviet institutions, ruled by an Inner Ring (Presidium or Executive Committee), which was (and is) invariably composed of Jews, with one or two Russians as lay figures.]

was over the foreign as well as the domestic affairs of Sovietdom, being in fact Prime Minister. Now Sverdlov had been a paid agent of Germany and was still in the closest touch and relationship with Mirbach. The Tsar's own definition of Yakovlev's mission was unquestionably right, in substance, if not in detail—to obtain his endorsement of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk.

The Soviet organs published long accounts of Yakovlev's journey. In these he is falsely described as the representative of the Sovnarkom, i.e. of Lenin's parliament. That was merely to cover up the tracks. Yakovlev is quoted as speaking of Nicholas Romanov as a pleasant enough person, but of ' extraordinarily limited mtellect.' You see, he was not clever enough to realize the advantages that were offered to him.

The Germans, of course, were extremely displeased by this contretemps, more especially as it came in conjunction with the failure of their plan to nobble the Russian *intelligentzia* and with their aid to set up the ' new government ' that Ludendorff craved. One of Mirbach's chief assistants, a Dr. Ritzier, then remarked to one of these Russians, that ' the Bolsheviks are still necessary.' A few months later the Red Terror avenged the slight inflicted upon the German associates of Sverdlov.

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Voikov, the Jew, boasted to his ' lady ' friends in Ekaterinburg after the murder, that ' the world will never know what we did with the bodies.' It was his accomplices that suggested to the remorse-stricken Fesenko that the ' cinders were not there.' The insolent confidence in the superiority of their ' precautions ' displayed by Voikov is characteristic of his race.

The murderers invented another story in Perm, of which I have not yet spoken. Their agents gave information that one of the Grand Duchesses had been seen in the city and that she had been shot during the Terror some months after the ‘ execution ’ at Ekaterinburg. They were quite positive about it. They even pointed out the place where ' Anastasia ’ had been buried. The bodies—there were many—were exhumed ; the only one that was a young woman’s was **un**mistakably identified by the local police as that of ‘ Nastia Vorovka ’ (the thief Nastia), a well-known criminal.

* * * * *

The Komisar Safarov, afterwards editor of the official *Izvestiya,* wrote an article on the ' execution ’ which figures in the dossier as an interesting sidelight on the motives of the crime and its methods. It is only fair that the accused should speak for themselves. I here give a plain, unvarnished rendering of this ' defence ’ :—

‘ In the places seized by the Czecho-Slovaks and bands of White Guards in Siberia and the Southern Ural, authority has fallen into the hands of Black Hundred pogromists composed of purest Monarchists by profession. The real intentions of the White Guards of the Quadruple Entente are made plain by the mere fact that at the head of them all, as supreme war-lord, stands the Tsar’s general Alexeiev, the most devoted servant of Nicholas the Sanguinary, himself a convinced blood-shedder (paldch). . . .

‘ Around Nicholas all the time was spread an artful network of conspiracies. One of them was discovered during the transit from Tobolsk to Ekaterinburg.’ (Safarov here suggests that Yakovlev was a traitor, and passes over in silence the whole history of the interrupted journey. This compels the inference, which is borne out by scores of direct evidences, that the Tsik, i.e. Sverdlov, deliberately sent the Romanovs into a death-trap.) Safarov continues : ‘ Another plot was discovered just before the execution of Nicholas. The participants in the last conspiracy to deliver the murderer of workmen and peasants out of a peasant-workman's prison clearly identified their hopes with the hope that the Red capital of the Ural would be occupied by Czechoslovak White Guard pogromists.

' General Alexeiev wanted to bring over into his Stavka (G.H.Q.) his own Tsar.’ (The General had long been dead when Safarov wrote this article.) ' His calculations have not been justified. The people's assizes (narodny sud) have judged the All-Russian murderer and anticipated the plans of the counter-revolution. The will of the Revolution has been accomplished, although many of the formal aspects of bourgeois legal procedure were infringed, and the traditional, historical ceremonial of the execution of "crowned personages” was not observed. The peasant working-man’s authority here also expressed itself in a form of extreme ***democratism*** ; it made no difference for the All-Russian murderer and bad him shot just like an ordinary robber (razboinik'i. Nicholas the Sanguinary is no more, and the workmen and peasants may with full right say to their enemies : You played your stake on the Imperial crown. You have lost. Take your change —an empty crowned head.’

[Here is the way ' democratism ’ was applied. I cite Bolshevist writers :—

The ' instruction ’ issued by the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission to all Provincial Extraordinary Commissions (chrezvychuilti) says : ' The All-Russian Extraordinary Commission is

perfectly independent in its work, carrying out house searches, arrests, executions, which it afterwards reports to the Council of the People's Commissaries (Sovnavkom) and to the Central Executive Council (Tsik). The Provincial and District Extraordinary Commissions arc independent in their activities, and when called upon by the local Executive Council (Ispolkom) present a report of their work. In so far as house searches and arrests are concerned, a report made afterwards may result in putting right irregularities committed owing to lack of restraint. The same cannot be said of executions. ... II. can also be seen from the " instruction " that personal safety is to a certain extent guaranteed only to members of the Government, of the Central Executive Council (Tsik) and of the local Executive Committees (Ispolkom). With the exception of these few persons all members of the local committees of the (Bolshevik) party, of the Control Committees and of the Executive Committee of the party may be shot at any time by the decision of any Extraordinary Commission of a small district town if they happen to be on its territory, and a report of that made afterwards.' (From an article by M. Alminsky, Pravda,, October 8, 1918.)

Comrade Bokiv gave details of the work of the Petrograd District Commission since the evacuation of the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission to Moscow. The total number of arrested persons was 6,220. Eight hundred were shot (during about six months). (From a report of a meeting of the Conference of the Extraordinary Commission, Izvcsliya, October 19, 1918, No. 228.)]

The Russian peasants at Ekaterinburg looked at the matter differently. They caught Vaganov, one of the regicides, and killed him on the spot. It was very distressful to the Investigating Magistrate, but he could not prosecute the peasants : there were too many of them, and they would not have understood. It had appeared to them the right thing to do, to slay the Russian who had laid hands upon the Tsar.

But Safarov eludes the issue he himself raises. Why not have sent the Tsar for trial to the capital, to Moscow ? Surely that was the place where the ' will of the Revolution ' could have been properly displayed ! All these wonderful conspiracies of which he speaks made it all the more necessary to send him there and save the Ural Soviet from all responsibility. The approach of the Whites should have caused the local chieftains not to delay one single day. Why not ? Because Sverdlov had already sent for Syromolotov to arrange the murder.

The cynical references to ' *bourgeois* legal procedure ' and to ' historical ceremonial' will, it is to be hoped, put an end for ever to the legend of a ' trial.'

* * * * *

Yankel Sverdlov conversed with his agents in Ekaterinburg over the direct wire before and after the murder, giving directions when necessary. They forgot to destroy all evidence of these conversations. When the investigation was confided to experienced and fearless hands, one of the

first measures taken was to thoroughly overhaul the records of the telegraph office. It yielded astonishing results. I give some of the documents in this and the following chapters.

Here is the record of a conversation between the Red Tsar and, apparently, Beloborodov, the former in Moscow, the latter in Ekaterinburg. This record was written in pencil on the backs of telegram blanks. There are six such blanks. The writing is evidently of one and the same person. It consists of questions asked by Sverdlov and answers thereto. The record was made obviously on July 20, four days after the murder. Here it is, textually translated :—

What is heard with you ?

The position on the front is somewhat better than it appeared yesterday. It is ascertained that the opponent has denuded all fronts and flung all his forces on Ekaterinburg. Can we hold Ekaterinburg long ? It is difficult .to say. We are taking all measures to hold it. Everything superfluous has been evacuated from Ekaterinburg. Yesterday a courier left with the documents that interest you.

Communicate the decision of the Tsik, and may we acquaint the population by means of the text that you know ?

At a meeting of the Tsik presidium on the 18th it was decided (postanovleno} to recognize the decision of the Ur. Reg. Sovdep as regular (pravilnyni). You may publish your own text. With us yesterday, in all the newspapers was inserted a corresponding announcement. I have this instant sent for the exact text and will communicate it to you (tebii, i.e. to thee. Sverdlov is speaking to an inferior).

*****

This moment I shall hand over the exact text of our publication...

I do not reproduce it. There is no need, The ‘ wireless ’ printed in *The Times* of July 22,1918, is the exact and accurate translation of the text given in this conversation recorded in Ekaterinburg two days previously. (The Moscow and the Ekaterinburg texts are given in Chapter X.)

What better evidence could be found of the genuineness of the above record ? It stops there. But it tells us volumes. It is the language of conspirators, of accomplices in a crime and of a superior whose orders and whose initiative alone count. Yankel Sverdlov assumes his true proportions. He and the Bolshevist Government in which he was omnipotent as president of the Central Executive Committee (Tsik) and virtually chief also of the Red Inquisition are for ever identified with the murders that have been described in this work.

The courier referred to is Yurovsky. We know that he left on the 19th with the plunder and, it is believed, the ‘ heads.' The Whites were only beginning to concentrate their forces. That was four days after the ‘ execution.’

*****

But why all these precautions ? If the people are so anxious to try and punish their late ruler, why resort to all manner of subterfuges, both in committing the ‘ execution ’ and in acquainting the people with the death of their ‘ oppressor ’ ?

The answer is a simple one : Sverdlov and his associates were not sure of the people. The reason of that is equally simple: they were not Russians; they were Jews. They were ' internationalists,' repudiating all nationality, yet disguised under Russian names. The Russians in their midst were dupes or dummies. Krassin might come to clear the ground, but Apfelbaum-Kamenev appeared for the serious work. What happened in London in 1920 is comparable in a modest way with the Red mechanism in Russia itself.

Taken according to numbers of population, the Jews represented one in ten ; among the komisars that rule Bolshevist Russia they are nine in ten—if anything, the proportion of Jews is still greater.

These men feared the Russian people, they feared the Romanovs because they were Russians, they feared Nicholas Romanov because he had been a Russian Tsar, and when he refused to be seduced from his loyalty to his people and to the Allies they resolved that he should die—he and all the Romanovs. This resolve was carried out when the advance of antiBolshevist forces gave a reasonable hope of sophisticating the crime and avoiding a just punishment. And so definite was Jew-ruled Moscow on the necessity of the ex-Tsar’s death that a whole month before the murder the report persisted that Nicholas II was dead.

On June 21 the Komisar of the Press, named Stark, tele graphed to the Presidium of the Sovdep at Ekaterinburg ‘ Urgently inform regarding authenticity reports Nicholas Romanov killed.’ On the 23rd Bonch-Bruevich, the secretary of the Sovnarkom (Council of People’s Commissaries, of which Lenin is president), telegraphed to the President of the Ekaterinburg Sovdep (i.e. Beloborodov) : ‘ Information circulating Moscow alleging former Emperor Nicholas the Second killed. Send any available information.’ A certain Boyard arrived in Ekaterinburg on July 9

and telegraphed to the French Consul in Moscow : ' Am staying meanwhile at British Consulate, Reports about Romanov false."

*****

The Germans knew what they were doing when they sent Lenin's pack of Jews into Russia. They chose them as agents of destruction. Why ? Because the Jews were not Russians and to them the destruction of Russia was all in the way of business, revolutionary or financial. The whole record of Bolshevism in Russia is indelibly impressed with the stamp of alien invasion. The murder of the Tsar, deliberately planned by the Jew Sverdlov (who came to Russia as a paid agent of Germany) and carried out by the Jews Goloshchekin, Syromolotov, Safarov, Voikov and Yurovsky, is the act not of the Russian people, but of this hostile invader.

*****

The Jewish domination in Russia is supported by certain Russians : the ' burgess ' Ulianov, *alias* Lenin, the ' noble Chicherin, the ' dissenter ' Bonch-Bruevich. They are all mere screens or dummies behind which the Sverdlovs and the thousand and one Jews of Sovdepia continue their work of destruction ; having wrecked and plundered Russia by appealing to the ignorance of the working folk, they are now using their dupes to set up a new tyranny worse than any that the world has known.

*****

Sovietdom has consecrated three heroes to whom monuments have been erected : to Karl Marx, to Judas Iscariot, and to Leo Tolstoi, the three names that are associated with Revolution, Apostasy, and Anarchism ; two of them Jews.

*****

When the Jew Kanegisser assassinated the Jew Uritsky the Soviets ordained a Terror throughout the land. Rivers of Russian blood had to wipe away the stain caused by a Jew who dared to oppose the Jewish rulers of unhappy Russia.

CHAPTER 15: THE RED KAISER

WHEN Yakovlev failed to remove the Tsarevich from Tobolsk and to ‘ convert ’ the Tsar, he disappointed Mirbach more than he disappointed Sverdlov.

The Jews feared the Russians, but the Germans wanted to use them. The Red Tsar planned to exterminate the Romanovs, but the Red Kaiser proposed to reinstate Nicholas.

For a time their respective schemes assumed divergent courses ; in the end, Wilhelm's agents realized that they could not dissociate themselves from the Red Tsar, and it was the latter’s plan that prevailed. But, morally as well as practically, the German hand which had brought the Jew murderers into Russia, controlled and directed the assassins’ work. Only when Berlin realized that the Romanovs were irrevocably on the side of the Entente did they release the hands of the murderers.

The proposal that Yakovlev brought to Tobolsk was much more insidious than the Tsar understood it to be. Nicholas Was not only to endorse the peace concluded at Brest ; he Was to seize the reins of power with the help of German bayonets and to give his only son to be a lawful Tsar under German tutelage. This meant the intervention of Russia in the war again, but on the German side. The Red Kaiser and his staff did not trust their Red agents any more.

While Yakovlev went to Tobolsk as envoy extraordinary of the Tsik (but in reality of the German G.H.Q.), the official representative of Germany to the Soviet Government, with which she was in treaty and in virtual alliance, was summoning a secret conference of Anti-Soviet Russians to arrange for the advent of the ' new government ' desired by Ludendorff.

It was a very pretty scheme, quite on German lines. But it failed at every point. The Germans once more had shown a total incapacity to understand human nature. Nicholas scorned the base overtures ; the Russian *intelligentsia* displayed, on this occasion, a sound understanding of their duties and interests.[1] The illness of Alexis was another obstacle, though in itself it made no difference.

*****

Sverdlov was not disturbed by Yakovlev's failure to bring Nicholas and Alexis to Moscow. He had his agents everywhere. While Soloviev acted as watch-dog over the captives of Tobolsk so that no stranger to German plans should spirit them away, innumerable Red Solovievs hemmed the captives in. The common herd of the Soviets knew nothing, of course. The strings were cunningly and discreetly pulled from Moscow according to the best methods of Potsdam and Wilhelmstrasse.

No sooner had Yakovlev started on the terrible rush of 160 miles over bogs and rivers running deep water over breaking ice to Tiumen, than the Jewish conclave in Ekaterinburg received its orders—to stop the travellers at all costs. Omsk was at once ' stampeded ' by the false statement that Yakovlev was trying to arrange a rescue. Yakovlev was really seeking to escape the North Ural net by taking the South Ural route. He did not have to go through Omsk at all, but to change from the Perm on to the Samara line. There was no escaping out of the country by that route then. It could lead only to Moscow. Nevertheless, this train turned back to Ekaterinburg. Sverdlov did not really want the Romanovs to go further. He could not afford to quarrel openly with his former paymasters, but he was probably shrewd enough and sufficiently well informed to suspect their secret designs.

The talk of a trial in Moscow did not begin till much later, when Moscow rumour reported the Tsar as already defunct, and solely as an antidote to those rumours, as they threatened to upset the plan of murder.

Sakovich, formerly surgeon in a hussar regiment and exultra-monarchist, appertained to the Ural Regional Sovdep as Komisar of Health. He deposed afterwards that he had overheard Goloshchekin, Safarov and Voikov discussing with Beloborodov the alternative of wrecking the train with Nicholas Romanov or of ' arranging ' an accident. In the former case, the responsibility would be placed on ' counter-revolutionaries ' trying to effect a rescue. He did not listen to all the details as it did not concern his department. But the Jews did not have to carry out the plan then. The Germans were still in favour of the survival of Nicholas. The idea was carried out some months later at Alapaevsk. I have a copy of the message sent afterwards to Moscow and Petrograd in which the murderers seriously describe the ' rescue [1] staged by them after the murder as having been the cause of the grand ducal ' disappearance.'

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The Romanovs were suffered to live. A German mission (ostensibly Red Cross) came to Ekaterinburg at the end of May to ascertain all about the life of the ' residents of Ipatiev's house,' as the Imperial prisoners were officially styled. These spies went straight to Berlin with their report. The Red Kaiser knew full well what torments were being endured by those whom he had professed to cherish, who after all were his kith and kin. He could have saved them at any time. But . . . they would not be saved by him. . . .

Mirbach's death did not, perhaps, introduce any modification of the plan of slaughter. He was assassinated one week before the event. The Bolsheviks declared that his death was an act of provocation committed by their Socialist opponents and gravely resolved that they must not quarrel with Germany, because that would only be playing into the hands of the assassins. This solemn farce had a deeper meaning.

*****

During the summer of that year the Siberian anti-Bolshevist units began to grow in numbers and strength. The Germans had themselves foolishly promoted this reaction by arresting the departure of the Czechs and compelling them to fight. A Siberian Army was quickly springing into existence. It might drive the Red Tsar out of Moscow and thus, instead of an ally or agent there, the Red Kaiser would find himself confronted by a hostile Russia. The war was slowly dragging to its fateful end ; every battalion counted. The Entente knew what the assistance of Russia meant, so the Entente went to the aid of the Czechs and Siberians.

Ludendorff does justice to this tragic dilemma in his book of *War Memories : —*

' . . . The Entente, realizing that they could not work with a Government which looked for support to Germany, took action against Bolshevism, and instead of sending these troops (the Czechs) to France, held them up along the Siberian railway on the frontier between Russia and Siberia, in order to fight the Government in Moscow. In addition to this, by garrisoning the railway, the Entente prevented the return of our prisoners of war from Siberia. This was unquestionably a serious loss to us.' (Vol. II, p. 654.)

The holding up of the Czechs was Ludendorff's own work. He is ashamed to admit it, and puts the cart before the horse in pleading that the

Entente displayed such far-sighted activity. Moreover, it was precisely the German-Magyar prisoners of war who, rallying to the appeal of their Kaisers, stopped the departure of the Czechs. Ludendorff is too modest. But his statement makes one point crystal-clear : that in the German view the plan to get rid of the played-out Red Tsar, to put a subservient White Tsar in his place, had to be dropped. The Red Tsar might still be useful yet. As Dr. Ritzier had remarked : ‘ The Bolsheviks are still necessary.’

The usefulness of the Bolsheviks was to be twofold : (1) to defend the German front in Russia ; (2) to prevent the White Tsar from joining the Russian forces of the Entente.

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This being the story of the Tsar’s murder, we are concerned chiefly with the second part of Yankel Sverdlov’s German programme. How was it to be carried out so that there should be no possible mistake ? Obviously, there was only one way—through death’s dark portals. To bring the Tsar or the Tsarevich to Moscow would involve risks. The Jews were in a fright; telegrams discovered in Ekaterinburg show that they trusted none of the Russians in their employ. That is why the Romanovs remained in Ekaterinburg.

Four days before Mirbach’s assassination, consequently while the Red Tsar had his daily audiences with the representative of the Red Kaiser, Goloshchekin was already in Moscow, and had discussed the murder with Sverdlov, had telegraphed to Beloborodov to send another member of the conclave to Moscow.

The Germans approved the murder ; there can be no doubt on this point. The position held by Mirbach in Moscow, his daily reports from the members of the Red Inquisition, which naturally had the closest connexion with the arrangements for the murder, such as the sending to Ekaterinburg of the ten Magyar-German ' Letts ’ as executioners, are conclusive evidences. The Red Tsar and the Red Kaiser were in accord.

But it was absolutely essential that no Russians should be left inside the house where the Romanovs were to die. Whether the Germans assented to the wholesale slaughter that took place remains in doubt. By that time Mirbach had gone to his last account, and the bloodthirstiness of the Jewish murderers perhaps exceeded the German design, and therein may be found a good reason for the report of their ' safety ’; but the Red Kaiser cannot

escape responsibility for the whole crime any more than can the Red Tsar who planned it and the Soviet regime that rendered such a butchery possible.

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Here is a translation of the original typewritten telegram found in the archives of the telegraph office in Ekaterinburg and included in the dossier: —

MOSCOW.

To President of Tsik SVERDLOV *for* GOLOSHCHEKIN.

Syromolotov has just gone for organization of affair in accordance with directions of Centre. Apprehensions unfounded stop. Avdeiev superseded, his assistant Moshkin arrested. Yurovsky replaces Avdeiev. Interior guard all relieved replaced by others. 4558.

BELOBORODOV.

Below the text in black ink is marked the date, ' 4/VII,' and further, in ink of the same colour, ' Telegram received,' after which in black pencil is the signature, ' Komisar To——' (the rest of the name illegible), this representative of the Soviet being in charge of the telegraph office and endorsing all official messages as they were handed in for transmission.

The message is its own explanation. It is a full and crushing confirmation of all that has preceded—fear of the Russians ; preparation of the murder ; direction of the plan from Moscow, and eagerness of the local Jews to anticipate the signal for the butchery. The horrible servility of the dummy president, Beloborodov, is disclosed in all its nakedness. He hastens to assure his Jewish masters that their ‘ apprehensions ’ are 'unfounded.' The German-Magyars who had done their best to carry out the Red Kaiser's behest to capture Siberia and to crush any hope of Russia’s military revival, were now called in to consummate the Red Kaiser’s plan by murdering the Tsar.

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For all that has been stated in these chapters there is unimpeachable authority. There is the dossier. And there is the overwhelming corroboration of the horrible realities that have converted a large part of Europe into a charnel ; Russia into **a** pest-house, and the rest of the world into a hotbed of unrest.

And pre-eminent among the doers of evil, murderers and despoilers, has been the Red Kaiser.

When, in 1915, he wrote to the Tsar, asking him to recall the days when they were friends, and Nicholas, mindful of the bitter lessons that friendship had entailed, replied that those days must for ever be forgotten, Wilhelm of Hohen- zollern started the machinery that was to sweep out of existence the Tsardom and Russia, and the hapless Romanovs.

In the autumn of 1915 there assembled in Vienna the representatives of the German and Austrian General Staffs to discuss a plan for the promotion of a revolutionary movement in Russia. It was then that all the outlines of the ' Russian ' revolution were laid down ; it was at that meeting that the leading actors in the Red tragedy were chosen : the Lenins and the Sverdlovs and the host of Jewish wreckers, who spent the interval between their engagement and their appearance on the Russian stage in the calm of Swiss resorts, studying and rehearsing their parts.

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The money that financed the ' Russian ’ revolution was German money, and—I say it on the strongest evidence which can be corroborated in the German secret archives—YANKEL SVERDLOV RECEIVED A SALARY FROM THE GERMANS TILL NOVEMBER 7, 1917, when, becoming Red Tsar of All the Russias, he had at his disposal loot unimaginable.

And thus it came to pass that the Germans who slew the Tsar and the Jews who organized, aided and abetted the murder, each left his marks upon the walls of Ipatiev’s house

CHAPTER 16: EPILOGUE

MANY hundreds of relics were collected in and around Ekaterinburg by the law, and more particularly by the military, officers of the White Government. The larger number had no value as clues. They were personal belongings—jewellery, clothing, linen-—that had been stolen before and after the murder. By Admiral Kolchak's orders, this property was taken to Vladivostok by General Diterichs in February, 191g, and sent to the Tsar's sister, the Grand Duchess Xenia, as next-of-kin.

Those of the Romanovs who had not been in the power of the Soviets and had succeeded in leaving the country were destitute. The total fortune belonging to the Tsar in England amounted to £500.

Two days after the murder, the Soviet Government issued a decree declaring all the property and possessions of the Romanovs forfeited to them. This act had a double purpose : to afford any banks holding funds to the credit of the family a pretext for non-payment; to ' legitimise ' the robbery of the corpses in the wood and the appropriation of the valuables left in Ekaterinburg.

The ropes of pearls and the matchless pearl necklace snatched from the bodies have been the objects of barter on the Continental and London markets. Red missions smuggled in a huge quantity of jewels belonging to the Crown and to the Romanovs personally as well as to other individuals—all ' forfeited ' in the same manner.

* * * * *

Among the relics was a private code that was found in the ventilator of the Ipatiev lavatory. It bore the following inscription in the Empress's hand : ' For my own beloved Nicky, dear, to use when he is absent from his "spitzbub." Er. his lovingly, Alice. Osborne, July, 1894.' The German word had been erased and rewritten in Russian! The owner of this little book had evidently prized it above everything else, and fearing that it might be taken away from him had hidden it—hoping, no doubt, to claim it some day.

Also among the mementoes from the funeral pyre came a ruby that belonged to the murdered Empress. It was identified by her maid, who told the following story : ' The Emperor gave her Majesty a ruby ring when she was only fifteen. The' fell in love even then. It was at the wedding of her

sister the Grand Duchess Elizabeth. After that they thought about. each other for eight years. The Empress always wore the ruby ring hanging on a chain on her breast.'

The spaniel Joy also came to England. Both the dogs that were most highly prized by the Imperial family were of English breeds. Jemmy, who died with her masters, was a diminutive black-and-tan King Charles, so small that she could not mount the Ipatiev stairs unaided.

*****

The sufferings of the Romanovs in Ipatiev's house were so terrible that it is not seemly to misrepresent them, as some writers have done, in sordid fashion. I have the inventory of the house and its contents, signed by Ipatiev and the Komisars ; I have the *proces-verbal* of Sergeiev's inspection, made within a fortnight of the murder ; lastly, I have the evidence of my own eyes. The house itself contained every comfort and convenience : electric light, excellent stoves, a well- appointed bath-room and lavatory, electric bells everywhere, plenty of good and even luxurious furniture. The bath was in working order, and, when Sergeiev visited it, contained firewood for the heater, sheets bearing the Imperial monogram, and a cake of soap on the rack, besides numerous other signs of frequent usage. The brutal guards, being used to the Russian steam-bath, were not interested in this ' outlandish ' contrivance, and except for their prying and offensive habits did not apparently stand in the way of personal cleanliness.

The story of the girlish locks shorn because of the impossibility of other methods of combating dirt and its consequences is not borne out by the evidence. ' Combings ' of hair of four different hues were found ; also some short hair in the bathroom. One would expect to find them. It is stated in the dossier that a barber visited the house to attend the Tsar and the Tsarcvich.

Each member of the family had his or her bed. There were sheets, pillows and blankets. There was a wash-house in the courtyard.

For some reason the house was deficient in crockery, plate and table-linen, hence quite needless discomfort was inflicted upon the family at meal-times. The peasant-guards, inoculated with the anti-bourgeois theories, saw no particular hardship in their feeding out of one dish, as they themselves were accustomed to do in the villages.

The torment that was endured by the captives was far worse than any merely physical privations. But one such privation did affect them very

grievously : the utter impossibility of seeing anything at all beyond the painted glass of their windows. The youngest Grand Duchess (Anastasia) could not brook this privation any longer one day, and managed to open a window in the girls' room. She almost paid for this act with her life. The sentry in the inner hoarding immediately fired, just missing her. The bullet lodged in the window-frame. Anastasia gained nothing except a fright. She saw nothing except the hoarding and the sentry, and did not wait for a second shot.

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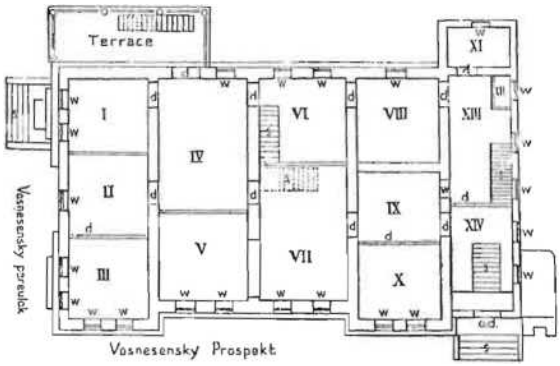
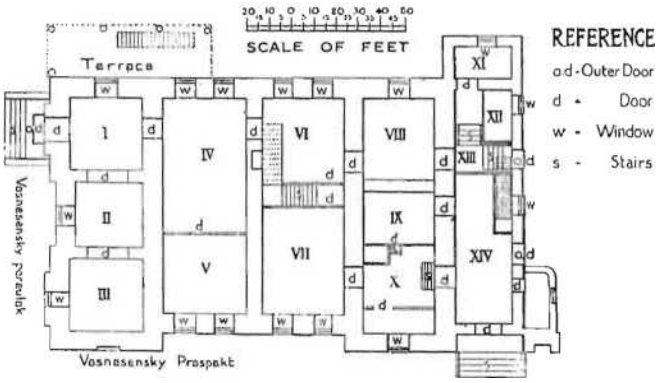
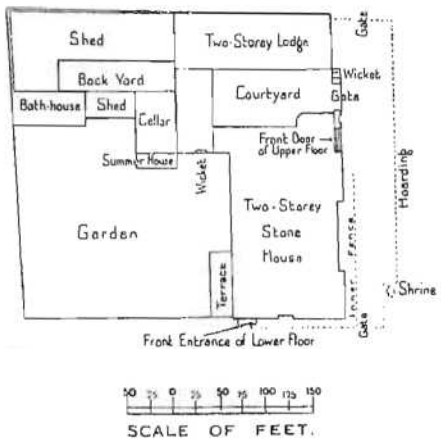


PLAN OF UPPER. STOREY - IPATIEVS HOUSE



PLAN OF LOWER. FLOOK.



PLAN OF IPATIEVS PROPERTY
IN
EKATERINBURG

In the room where the Imperial couple and Alexis lived and slept—next to the chamber in which their four daughters were crowded—Alexandra placed a good-luck sign. It was so unobtrusive that Gaida, the Czech commander who forcibly installed himself in this room, probably did not notice it. In pencil she formed the mystic sign of the swastika and inscribed the date ' 1730 April,' the day of her arrival in the house.

In the death-chamber in addition to the ‘ Belsatzar ’ inscription was one that has yet to be deciphered. It is in thick black ink, written with an expert hand, and just below, on the window-sill, are three groups of figures that may or may not have a meaning.

THE EMPRESS ALEXANDRA'S GOOD-LUCK SIGN.

THE MYSTERIOUS INSCRIPTION IN THE DEATH CHAMBER.

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Some of the persons with whom the reader has become familiar have gone to their last account.

The Russian regicide Medvedev died in prison of typhus early last year. His accomplice Yakimov died in prison of inflammation of the lungs at the end of last year. Their death and burial certificates are both in the dossier.

Yurovsky wrote a letter to a certain Dr. A. before he fled from Ekaterinburg imploring him to protect his old mother, ' who does not share my views, but who may suffer simply because I am her son.' It is at once an avowal of guilt and a proof that even the most bloodthirsty wretch has some good in him. This man had coolly tortured, murdered and cut up innocent children, and was not able to remove his old mother because he had to take the proofs of his crime to Moscow; yet he does not forget her. Before the Kolchak armies left Ekaterinburg we heard that Yurovsky had been seen in the city. Had he come at great risk to look for his mother ? Sokolov had had her removed to Irkutsk. She feared and loathed her son.

Yankel Sverdlov, the Red Tsar, died in Moscow early in 1919. He was knocked on the head by the workmen at one of the Morozov mills, and succumbed to concussion of the brain. Sovietdom was in an uproar. It was officially announced that this ' valiant defender of the people's rights ' had come to a natural end, by inflammation of the lungs. Nevertheless, the Chrezvychaika could not allow the Red Tsar to be so dishonoured. Yankel was followed to the outer borne by thousands of innocent victims offered up in holocaust to his memory.

The mortal remains of the blood-stained agent and associate of the Red Kaiser were exposed to the public gaze and given a pompous Red funeral, and the Theatre Square which faces the building where Yankel had spun his web of blood received a new name, the accursed name of Sverdlov.

None of the Red Jews dared to wear the mantle of Yankel Sverdlov openly. His office was delegated to Kalinin, a ' dummy ' of the Beloborodov variety, who provided the needful Russian screen to cloak their villainies. For there was no change in the spirit of the Red Jew government of Russia, only an adaptation of methods, a variation of victims— first the *bourgeois,* then the *prolelire.*

*****

The Russians who fought and bled for their country are almost extinct. One of the last who died in the sacred cause was Nicholas II and the other Romanov victims of the Red invaders, German and Jewish. A remnant

persisted to the end. To them the Red usurpers of Moscow could never be anything except an alien domination.

I recall the night before we left Ekaterinburg. The Reds were approaching, but Sokolov went into the darkness and the rain to obtain the evidence of important peasant witnesses. He told them who he was and the object of his call. They could have locked him up in a cellar and given him up to the Reds. It was to their advantage to do so. By giving him information they incurred great risk. He explained it all to them. ‘ And now what will you do ? ’ he asked. ' Will you help justice ? Will you remember that he who is dead was your Tsar ? ’ They did not hesitate, one instant. They chose the path of honour, of justice, of self-sacrifice. They gave their evidence and brought Sokolov on his way.

It is the peasant that will bring Russia back to new life. Alexandra's vision may yet come true, and Nicholas and the Romanovs may not have died in vain.

APPENDIX A: THE MEMBERS OF THE IMPERIAL FAMILY AT THE OUTBREAK OF THE REVOLUTION

Nicholas II, Alexandrovich, Emperor of Russia, eldest son of the Emperor Alexander III, born in Gachino (near Petersburg) on May 6 (19), 1867. Ascended to the throne on October 20, 1894. Married Princess Alice of Hesse on November 14, 1894. At the outbreak of the Revolution he was 49 years of age.

Empress Alexandra (Princess Alice) Feodorovna, the wife of the Emperor Nicholas II, born Princess Alexandra of Hesse on May 25, 1872. At the outbreak of the Revolution she was 44 years of age.

The Grand Duchess Olga Nikolaievna, the Emperor's oldest daughter, born on November 3, 1895.

The Grand Duchess Tatiana Nikolaievna, the Emperor's second daughter, born on May 29, 1897.

The Grand Duchess Maria Nikolaievna, the Emperor's third daughter, born June 14, 1899.

The Grand Duchess Anastasia Nikolaievna, the Emperor's youngest daughter, bom on June 5, 1901.

The Grand Duke Alexis Nikolaievich, the Emperor's only son and heir to the crown, bom July 30, 1904.

The Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovich, the Emperor's brother, who was considered the heir to the throne before the birth of Alexis Nikolaievich. Bom November 22, 1872.

CHRONOLOGY

(Dates are given here in the Gregorian calendar, which was adopted in Russia in 1918.)

1917

March 15. Emperor Nicholas II abdicates in favor of his brother, Grand Duke Michael. Provisional Government formed.

March 16. Grand Duke Michael refuses the crown and abdicates.

March 21. By order of the Provisional government, the Emperor is placed under arrest.

August 13. By order of the Provisional Government, the Imperial Family departs Tsarskoe-Selo palace for Tobolsk.

August 19. The Imperial Family arrives at Tobolsk. After a few nights on board the steamer, they are taken to the Governor's house.

November 7. The Bolsheviks overthrow the Provisional Government in Petrograd (St. Petersburg), and take power.

1918

January II. Soldiers in Tobolsk protest because an officiating priest reads a prayer asking long life for the Imperial Family.

February 25. By order of the Bolshevik government, the allowances of the Imperial Family are reduced to soldiers' rations. A life of privation begins.

April 12. By order of the Bolshevik government, the Imperial Family is more severely supervised.

April 26. The Emperor, the Empress and the Grand Duchess Maria depart for Ekaterinburg. The Tsarevich and the other daughters remain temporarily in Tobolsk.

April 30. The Emperor and the others accompanying him arrive at Ekaterinburg. They are held in Ipatiev's house, and their belongings are carefully searched.

May 1. Dismissal of all persons attached to the Imperial Family, with the exception of the physician.

May 23. The Tsarevich and the three Grand Duchesses leave Tobolsk for Ekaterinburg.

July 16. Last day of life of the members of the Imperial Family. By order of Sverdlov and Lenin, they are murdered that night by a team commanded by Yakov Yurovksy. Their bodies are searched, and then taken away for secret disposal in a woods.

DOCUMENT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE URAL SOVIET ACKNOWLEDGING THE ARRIVAL
OF THE EMPEROR AT EKATERINBURG

THE WORKERS' AND PEASANTS' GOVERNMENT OF THE RUSSIAN SOVIET FEDERATIVE REPUBLIC

Ural District Soviet
of Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' Deputies

Presidium
Ekaterinburg, April 30, 1918

On the 30th of April 1918, the undersigned, Chairman of the Ural District Soviet of Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' Deputies, Alexander Georgevich Beloborodov, received from the Commissar of the All- Russian Central Executive Committee, Vasily Vasilievich Yakovlev, the following persons transferred from the town of Tobolsk: (1) The former Tsar, Nicholas Alexandrovich Romanov; (2) the former Tsaritsa, Alexandra Feodorovna Romanova; (3) the former Grand Duchess, Maria Nikolaievna Romanova — all of them to be kept under guard in the city of Ekaterinburg.

(signed) A. Beloborodov
Member of District Executive Committee,
(signed) D. Didkovsky

ALPHABETICAL INDEX OF NAMES

AKSIUTA. Captain. Commander of the First Rifle Regiment at Tsarskoe- Selo, and of the detachment of guards in Tobolsk.

APRAKSIN. Count. At the outbreak of the Revolution Count Apraksin was attached to the household of the Empress, and was in charge of her private affairs.

AVDEIEV, Alexander. Formerly a locksmith, he served as Commendant at Ekaterinburg May-June, 1918.

BELOBORODOV, Alexander. The Chairman of the Ural Provincial Soviet of the Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. Upon orders given through him the Imperial Family was assassinated.

BENCKENDORFF. Count. He was Grand Marshal of the Imperial Court.

BOTKIN, Evgeny Sergeievich. A physician. Dr. Botkin stayed with the Imperial Family from the moment of their arrest until the time of their murder. He was shot with the Imperial Family.

BUXHOEVDEN, Sophie. Baroness. A personal maid-of-honor to the Empress, who accompanied her to Tobolsk.

CHEMODUROV, Terenty Ivanovich. The Emperor's valet. He arrived with the Imperial Family at Tobolsk and stayed with the Emperor until the Imperial Family was removed to Ekaterinburg. He died shorty afterwards.

CHKHEIDZE. A member of the Duma and a leader of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' Deputies during the first months of the Revolution.

DHEN, Julia, Madame. The wife of the first officer on the Emperor's yacht. *Standart,* she was an intimate friend of the Empress.

DEMIDOVA, Anna. A favorite maid of the Empress. She stayed with the Empress at Tsarskoe-Selo, Tobolsk and Ekaterinburg, and was shot with the Imperial Family.

DEREVENKO, Vladimir Nikolaievich. A physician who stayed with the Imperial Family in Tobolsk.

DMITRIEV. A special Commissar, sent to Tobolsk by the Omsk Soviet.

DOLGORUKY (Dolgurokov), Vasily. Prince. Marshal of the Imperial Court, who stayed with the Imperial Family in Tobolsk.

DOMODZIANZ. Ensign. Of Armenian origin, he was chosen by the Tsarskoe-Selo Soviet to assist Colonel Kobylinsky.

DUTZMAN. Commissar to the Imperial Family. He was sent from Omsk by the Siberian Soviet.

ERZBERG, Elizaveta (Elizabeth). The Grand Duchesses' maid. She was parted from the Imperial Family on the way to Ekaterinburg.

GIBBES, Charles Sidney. An English teacher to the Grand Duchesses and the Tsarevich. He joined the Imperial Family in Tobolsk and stayed with them until their arrival in Ekaterinburg.

GILLARD, Pierre. A French teacher to the Grand Duchesses and the Tsarevich. He stayed with the Imperial Family in Tobolsk and accompanied the Tsarevich to Ekaterinburg, where he was dismissed from the service of the Imperial Family.

HARITONOV, Ivan. Chef to the Imperial Family. He was shot with the Imperial Family.

HENDRYKOVA, Anastasia Vasilievna. Countess. A personal maid-of- honor to the Empress, who came with the Empress to Tobolsk. Shot at Perm.

HITROVO, Margaret. Maid-of-honor to the Grand Duchesses. She was arrested at Tobolsk.

HLYNOV. A Tobolsk priest who replaced the priest Vasiliev.

HOHRIAKOV. Chairman of the Tobolsk Soviet. He became Commissar to the Imperial Family after the resignation of Yakovlev.

KERENSKY, Alexander Feodorovich. Minister of Justice and then Prime Minister of the Provisional Government, 1917.

KOBYLINSKY, Evgeny. Colonel. He was appointed Commandant of the Garrison at Tsarskoe-Selo, and was later Commandant of the Palace. He escorted the Imperial Family to Tobolsk, and was in command of the guards until the time when the Imperial Family was removed to Ekaterinburg.

KORNILOV, Lavr Georgievich. Russian general and patriot. During the early days of the "February" Revolution he was made Command- er-in-Chief of the forces of the Provisional Government. He executed Kerensky's order for the arrest of the Imperial Family.

KOROVICHENKO, Paul. Colonel. He was made Commandant of the Tsarskoe-Selo Palace after Kotsebue.

KOTSEBUE. Captain of Uhlans, Commandant of the Tsarskoe-Selo Palace. He was dismissed and succeeded by Korovichenko.

KUZMIN, Ensign. He was in command of the military forces of the Petrograd District after Kornilov and Polovtzov.

Lvov, Georgi Evgenevich. Prime Minister of the Provisional Govern ment during the first three months following the "February" Revolution of 1917. He was suceeded by Kerensky.

Makarov. An engineer, he was attached to the Imperial Family during their journey to Tobolsk.

Medvedev, Pavel (Paul). Senior guard of the Imperial Family in Ekaterinburg. He took part in the murder of the Imperial Family.

Moshkin, Alexander. Formerly a locksmith, he became assistant to Commendant Avdeiev in Ekaterinburg. He was discharged for drunkenness and theft of the Emperor's belongings.

mrachkovsky, Serge. A military Commissar in the Red Army. He recruited the men who acted as guards of the Imperial Family in Ekaterinburg.

Nagorny, Klement Gregorievich. A personal attendant of the Tsare- vich, who was always in the service of the Imperial Family. When the Imperial Family was removed to Ekaterinburg he was dismissed, put in prison and shot.

Naryshkina, E.A. A lady-in-waiting to the Empress.

Nikiforov, Alexis. Senior Guard of the Imperial Family in Tobolsk.

Nikolsky, Alexander, Ensign. A member of the Socialist Revolutionary Party. He acted as assistant to Commissar Pankratov in Tobolsk.

Nikulin. An assistant to Commissar Yurovsky in Ekaterinburg.

pankratov, Vasily Semenovich. Appointed Commissar to the Imperial Family in September 1917, he was dismissed by the soldiers after the Bolshevik Revolution.

Pereverzev, Paul Nikolaievich. A lawyer, he replaced Kerensky as Minister of Justice in 1917, but later resigned on account of trouble with the Petrograd Bolsheviks. He instituted the search of the Emperor's papers at Tsarskoe-Selo.

piGNATTi. A district Commissar in Tobolsk. He occupied this position from the first days of the Revolution until the time of the downfall of Admiral Kolchak's Government.

Polovtzov. General. He replaced General Kornilov as commander of the military forces of the Petrograd District.

PROSKURIAKOV, Philip. A worker, he was one of the guards of the Imperial Family in Ekaterinburg.

Rasputin, Gregory. The notorious monk-adventurer. He was killed in December 1916.

RODIONOV. The commander of the “Letts” detachment in Tobolsk. He escorted the Tsarevich and the Grand Duchesses from Tobolsk to Ekaterinburg.

SCHNEIDER, Ekaterina (Katherine). Court reader. She was separated from the Imperial Family in Ekaterinburg.

SEDNEV, Ivan. A footman in the service of the Grand Duchess.

SVERDLOV, Yakov. A prominent Bolshevik, Chairman of the Central Executive Committee (“Tsik”) of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers’, Soldiers’ and Peasants' Deputies. Died in 1919.

TATISHCHEV, Ilia Leonidovich. Count. General A.D.C. to the Emperor. He stayed with the Imperial Family in Tobolsk and was discharged and shot on their arrival at Ekaterinburg.

TEGLEVA, Alexandra. Nurse to the Tsarevich and the Grand Duchesses. She stayed with the Imperial Family up to the time of their arrival in Ekaterinburg.

TRUPP, Alexis. An attendant in the service of the Imperial Family, hf was shot at the same time as the Imperial Family.

TUTELBURG, Mary. Maid to the Empress. She was separated from the Imperial Family on the way to Ekaterinburg.

VASILIEV. A priest of the Blagoveschensky Church in Tobolsk, he officiated at Divine Service in the Governor’s house.

VERSHININ. A member of the Duma who accompanied the Imperial Family to Tobolsk as Commissar of the Provisional Government.

VOLKOV, Alexis. A servant who was discharged and re-arrested upon the arrival of the Imperial Family at Ekaterinburg.

VYRUBOVA, Anna. A maid-of-honor and a personal friend of the Empress.

YAKIMOV, Anatoly. A workman, who was a senior guard of the Imperial Family in Ekaterinburg.

YAKOVLEV, Vasily. A Bolshevik Commissar, he replaced Pankratov in April, 1918. Came from Moscow to Tobolsk and went back on account of trouble with the Ekaterinburg Bolsheviks, who had seized the Imperial Family.

YUROVSKY, Yakov. Commandant. The jailer and the executioner of the Imperial Family.

APPENDIX B: STATEMENT OF PAVEL MEDVEDEV

During the period when Ekaterinburg was temporarily under control of the "White" (anti-Bolshevik) forces of Alexander Kolchak, a special committee headed by Nicholas Sokolov was established to investigate the murder of the Tsar and his family, and establish the facts of the case.

On February 21, 1919, the Sokolov committee deposed Pavel Medvedev, a prisoner who had been a member of the squad that carried out the murders. In his formal statement, Medvedev pretended that he had not taken part in the actual killing of the imperial family. However, as Wilton reports (pages 90-91), Medvedev's wife related that he had privately acknowledged to her his participation in the actual shootings.

Medvedev's signed statement (which appears in the 1920 US edition of Wilton's The Last Days of the Romanovs and, in part, in Radzinsky's The Last Tsar) is given here in full:

I am Pavel Spiridonovich Medvedev, 31 years of age, and belong to the Orthodox Church; able to read and write; bom a peasant of the Sissert factory of the Ekaterinburg district. I have a house belonging to me at the factory.

In September 1914, I was mobilized and assigned to the Opolchenskaia Drujina (33rd territorial battalion), located in the town of Verhotury. I was with the battalion for two months. I was then discharged and exempted from military service, on account, I believe, of being employed as a munitions worker.

After the February revolution, I joined the Bolshevik party in April 1917, as did the majority of workmen in our factory. For three months I paid one percent of my wages to the party treasury. Then I stopped paying because I was no longer willing to participate in the activities of the party.

After the October [Bolshevik] Revolution, I was enlisted in the Red army in January 1918, and in February they sent me to the front to fight against Dutov. Commissar Sergius Mrachkovsky was in command of my detachment. We fought in the vicinity of Troizk, but we did more wandering on the steppes than actual fighting. In April I came home on leave and spent three weeks there. In the second half of May Commissar Mrachkovsky came to our factory and to recruit workmen for a special detachment

assigned to guard the house where the former emperor, Nicholas II, and his family were held. The conditions appeared attractive to me and I enlisted. Altogether 30 workmen were enlisted.

On May 19, 1919, the detachment recruited by Commissai Mrachkovsky arrived in Ekaterinburg, and was quartered in the Novy Gostiny Dvor (new market house), where we lived until May 24th. By order of the Ural district soviet [council], we elected from among our ranks two seniors. Alexis Nikiforov and I were elected. On May 24th our detachment was transferred to new quarters in the lower floor of the laptiev house. That same day the former emperor and his family arrived. They were assigned to the upper floor of this house. The whole upper floor of the house was at their disposal, except one room (to the left of the entrance), which was occupied by the commandant of the house and his assistant. The commandant was Alexander Avdeiev, a worker of the Zlokasov factory. His assistant was Moshkin (I don't remember his Christian name). Two other men were also quartered in the commandant's room. I do not know their names, but I know they were Zlokasov workmen.

As soon as our group arrived at the Ipatiev house, the commandant ordered me (because I was senior), to receive the prisoners. Together with Avdeiev and Moshkin, I entered the comer room (the tsar's bedroom). The following persons were there: The emperor, his wife, their son, their four daughters, Dr. Botkin, the cook, the waiter and a boy. (I do not know their names). After counting the group, and determining that they were twelve in number, we left, without having spoken to them. The tsar's four daughters were assigned to the room adjoining the tsar's bedroom. At first there were no beds for them, but two c three days later beds were brought in.

The commandant was in charge of life in the house; the guards performed only sentry duty. The guards were on duty in three shifts at first, and then four. After staying in the Ipatiev house two or three weeks, we were transferred to the Popov house, which was exactly opposite the laptiev house. A few days after this the guard was increased with 14 additional workmen from the Zlokasov factory, which is situated in Ekaterinburg. These Zlokasov workmen also elected their senior, a man by the name of Yakimov. Altogether there were eleven sentry posts; two were inside the house; two by the machine guns; and four outside the house.

Every day the tsar's family would walk in the garden. The heir [Alexei] was sick all the time, and the emperor carried him in his wheel chair. For a

time, dinner was brought for the family from the soviet's dining-room. Later, though, they were allowed to prepare their own dinner in the upper floor kitchen. The duties of the seniors (guard captains) were to arrange for food and supplies for the guards, to change the sentries, and to supervise them. While on duty the senior had to stay in the commandant's room. At first the seniors took turns every twelve hours in performing their duties. After the third senior, Konstantin Dobrynin, was elected, we did duty in eight-hour shifts. At the end of June or at the beginning of July (I don't remember exactly), commandant Avdeiev and his assistant, Moshkin, were removed. (It seems that they were suspected of stealing the Tsar's belongings.) A new commandant was assigned; his name was Yurovsky. The new commandant's assistant arrived with him. His name I do not remember.

On the evening of July 16, between seven and eight p.m., just after my duty shift had just begun, commandant Yurovsky ordered me to take away the Nagan revolvers from the guards, and to bring them all to him. From the sentries and some other guards, I took twelve revolvers and brought them all to the commandant's office. Yurovsky announced to me: "We will have to shoot them all tonight. Notify the guardsmen not to be alarmed if they should hear shots." I understood that Yurovsky intended to shoot the Tsar's entire family, as well as the doctor and servants who lived with them, but I did not ask him where or by whom the decision was made. I must tell you that, on order from Yurovksy, the boy who assisted the cook had been transferred earlier that morning to the guardsmen's rooms in the Popov house. The lower floor of the Ipatiev house was occupied by Latvians from the Latvian commune who took up their quarters there after Yurovsky was made commandant. They were ten in number.

At about ten o'clock in the evening, in accordance with Yurovsky's order, I informed the guardsmen not to be alarmed if they should hear firing. At about midnight Yurovsky woke up the tsar's family. I do not know if he told them the reason they were being wakened or where they were to be taken. I positively affirm that it was Yurovsky who entered the rooms where the tsar's family was. Yurovsky had not ordered me or Dobrynin to waken the family.

In about an hour the entire family, the doctor, the maid and two servants got up, washed and dressed themselves. Just before Yurovsky went to wake the family, two members of the extraordinary commission [Cheka] arrived

at Ipatiev house. Shortly after one o'clock in the night the tsar, tsaritsa, their four daughters, the maid, the doctor, the cook and the waiter came out of their rooms. The tsar carried the heir in his arms. The emperor and heir were dressed in "Gimnasterkas" (soldiers' shirts) and wore caps. The empress and the daughters were dressed, but their heads were uncovered. The emperor with the heir proceeded first. The empress, her daughters and the others followed him. Yurovsky, his assistant, and the two above-mentioned members of the extraordinary commission accompanied them. I was also present.

During the time I was present, no one of the tsar's family asked anybody any questions. They neither wept nor cried. After going downstairs to the ground floor, we went out into the courtyard, and from there by the second door (counting from the gate), we entered the lower floor of the house. After entering the corner room, adjoining the storeroom with a sealed door. Yurovsky ordered chairs to be brought. His assistant brought three chairs. One chair was given to the emperor, one to the empress, and the third to the heir.

The empress sat by the wall with the window, near the rear column of the arch. Behind her stood three of her daughters. (I knew their faces very well, because I saw them every day during their walks, but I don't know them by name.) The heir and the emperor sat side by side, almost in the middle of the room. Dr. Botkin stood behind the heir. The maid, a tall woman, stood by the left post of the door leading to the storeroom. By her side stood one of the tsar's daughters (the fourth). Two servants stood at the left of the entrance to the room, against the wall separating the storeroom.

The maid had a pillow in her arms. The tsar's daughters had also brought small pillows with them. One was put on the seat of the empress' chair; another on the heir's chair. It looked as if all of them guessed their fate, but not a single sound was uttered. Eleven men walked into the room, all at the same time: Yurovsky, his assistant, the two from the extraordinary commission [Cheka], and seven Latvians.

Yurovsky ordered me to leave, saying: "Go out to the street and see if anyone's there, and if the shots can be heard." I went out to the courtyard, which was enclosed by a fence, but before I could get to the street I heard the firing. Immediately I returned to the house (only two or three minutes having elapsed). Upon entering the room where the execution took place, I

saw all the members of the tsar's family lying on the floor, with many wounds in their bodies.

The blood was gushing. The doctor, the maid and the servants had also been shot. When I entered the heir was still alive, and moaning. Yurovsky walked over to him and shot him two or three more times. The heir fell still.

The murderous aspect of all this, and the smell and sight of the blood, made me sick. Before the assassination Yurovsky distributed the revolvers. He also gave me one but, as I already said, I did not take part in the murder. After the assassination Yurovsky told me to bring some guardsmen to wash up the blood in the room. On the way to the Popov house I met two seniors, Ivan Starkov and Konstantin Dobrynin, who were running toward the Ipatiev house. Dobrynin asked me: "Has Nicholas II been shot?" I answered that Nicholas II and the whole of his family had been shot. I brought twelve or fifteen guardsmen with me. These men carried the bodies to the motor truck that stood near the entrance of the house.

The bodies were carried out on stretchers made of bed sheets and shafts taken from sledges in the courtyard. When loaded on trucks they were wrapped in soldiers' clothing. The truck driver was Lyukhanov, a Zlokasov worker. The members of the [Cheka] extraordinary commission took seats in the truck, and it drove away. I do not know in what direction the truck went, nor do I know to where the bodies were taken.

The blood in the room was washed away and everything was put in order. By three o'clock in the morning it was all over. Then Yurovsky went to his room and I went to the guardroom.

After I woke at eight o'clock, I went to the commandant's room. I met there with the chairman of the [Ural] district soviet, Beloborodov, Commissar Goloschekin and Ivan Starkov. The last-named was on duty (he had been selected to be senior two or three weeks earlier). All the rooms in the house were in disorder. Things were scattered. Suit-cases and trunks were opened. Piles of gold and silver things were laid out on tables in the commandant's room. Objects of jewelry which had been taken from the members of the tsar's family just before tire murder were also there, as well as things they had been wearing at the time of their death, such as bracelets, earrings and watches. The precious objects were put into trunks brought from the coach house. The assistant commandant was present. In one of the rooms I found under the Holy Bible six ten-ruble bank notes, and appropriated them. I also took several silver rings and a few other trifles.

On the morning of the 18th my wife arrived and I went with her to the Sissert factory. I was instructed to distribute wages t the guardsmen's families. I returned to Ekaterinburg on July 2 All the tsar's belongings had already been taken from the house and the guards had been relieved. On July 21 I left Ekaterinburg together with commissar Mrachkovsky. In Perm commissar Golischekin assigned me to the group that was to prepare the destruction of the stone bridge, in case of the appearance of White [anti-Bolshevik] troops. I didn't have enough time to blow up the bridge, as I had been instructed. Anyway, I did not wish to do so, as I wanted to surrender myself voluntarily. I received the order to blow up the bridge while it was under fire from the Siberian ["White"] troops [of Kolchak], and I surrendered voluntarily.

In response to the question as to where the bodies of the killed were taken, I can say only the following: On the way from Ekaterinburg railway station to the Alapaievsk, I met Peter Ermakov and asked him where the bodies had been carried. Ermakov explained to me that the bodies had been thrown down the shaft of a mine near the Verkh Issetsk works, and that afterwards the shaft had been destroyed by bombs or explosives to fill it up. I do not know and never heard anything concerning the wood piles that were burned near the shaft. I do not know anything more about where the bodies are. I was not interested in knowing who decided the fate of the tsar's family, or who had the right to dispose of them. I only carried out the order of those in whose service I was.

The above is all that I can say in reference to the accusation that is made against me. I cannot say any more. My testimony has been read to me, and it has been taken down correctly.

APPENDIX C: A BRIEF HISTORY OF RUSSIAN JEWRY

Robert Wilton throws additional light on the events leading up to the murder of Russia's imperial family in *Russia's Agony,* a penetrating account of the Russian Revolution that was published in London in 1918 and in New York in 1919. In Chapter VII of *Russia's Agony* he discusses frankly but not unsympathetically the crucially important role of the Jews, and sets the entire drama of the Revolution, including the Ekaterinburg murders, within a broader historical framework.

Some aspects of Jewish history are much better understood today than when Wilton wrote. According to many scholars, for example, the Jews of Poland and Russia are largely of nonSemitic ancestry. Until this century, these Jews generally spoke Yiddish, a German-based language written in Hebrew characters. Nevertheless, scholars now maintain, the Jews of Poland and Russia are largely descended from the Khazars, a once-powerful central Asian people that had occupied a vast area north of the Caucasus between the Black Sea and the Caspian, and who adopted Judaism as a state religion in about 740 A.D. These "Ashkenazi" Jews (which include the great majority of Jews in the United States) are therefore not lineal descendants of the Hebrews of the Bible.

Wilton's use of the expression "pseudo-Jew" to describe the atheists and other non-religious Jews who played such an important role in the Bolshevik movement may also be misleading. As many Jewish scholars have emphasized, Jewish identity is by no means dependent on religious belief. Albert Einstein, for example, is regarded as a Jew in spite of his indifference towards religion.

World Jewry remains substantially united even though many Jews are not at all religious, and even though the Jewish religious leadership is itself sharply divided between "reform" and "orthodox" branches. Especially during the last half-century, Israel, Zionism, and the ritualized "Holocaust" campaign have largely replaced traditional religious Judaism as the "glue" that holds together and inspires this far-flung, supra-national community.

Chapter 7 of *Russia's Agony,* entitled "The Jews," is herewith reprinted in full:

THE JEWS

For a proper comprehension of the situation in Russia under the Old Regime, and more particularly of the events that occurred during the Revolution, it becomes necessary to deal at some length with the position of the Jews. It has an intimate bearing upon all that happened in 1917.

Something like six millions of Jews inhabited the Russian Empire at the beginning of the war. They were twice as numerous as the Germans, with whom they were largely associated in business. Their numbers had been enormously increased as the result of an evil act — the partition of Poland at the end of the eighteenth century. By this political blunder Russia strengthened the Brandenburg-Prussian realm, and saddled herself with the Polish and Jewish questions. Thereby she was destined to come, sooner or later, into direct collision with the Germans and to find herself handicapped in her struggle.

The ancestors of the Polish Jews had fled from Germany to escape persecution. But they brought with them a deep-rooted association with that country. During centuries of abode in Teutonic lands they had evolved a specific language known as Yiddish, a German jargon. They acted as a sort of advance-guard of German penetration. In Poland they enjoyed a large measure of freedom. All business was in their hands. They acted as agents to the great landlords. The urban population was — and remains — mostly Jewish. But Poles and Jews lived peacefully enough together. The Jews certainly had the best of the bargain; they prospered, and were not ungrateful. They helped the Poles with money during the insurrections of 1831 and 1863.

Thirty years ago the Poles began to go into business themselves. Competition arose. The landlords started agricultural associations to shake off the Jewish monopoly. A rift betokened itself, and has been growing ever since — effectually discrediting Assimilationist theories, largely based upon the earlier and onesided adjustment of Polish and Jewish interests. (The history of Polish politics during the past three decades does not enter within the scope of this book. In the author’s opinion, based on long residence in Poland, it should afford convincing evidence of the utter failure of Assimilation or any other solution of the Jewish problem except Zionism.)

Old Russia tried vainly to denationalize the Poles, and, obeying the dictates of self-preservation, to prevent the Jews from spreading eastward. This was the origin of the Pale.

No Jews were supposed to enjoy rights of residence, roughly speaking, east of the Dnieper [river]. The Little Russians [Ukrainians] had become more or less inured to Jewish methods, and were left to bear the brunt of an ever-increasing Jewish element. For every Jewish boy and girl had to marry and produce a numerous progeny. Such was the Talmudic law. Unpermitted to hold lands and incapacitate for husbandry, the Jewish masses filled the towns and settlements, managing to eke out a miserable existence, living under the menace of *pogroms,* which exploited Gentiles were ready to perpetrate whenever the police gave the signal.

That the enforcement of the Pale system would lead to abuses was to be expected. Jews could not own land or reside outside specified settlements, even within the Pale. The police were able to levy blackmail for all kinds of real or alleged infractions of this rule. Wealthier Jews could always evade it by means of bribery. Without this source of income the police could not, indeed, have made ends meet. Their pay and allowances were ludicrously insufficient. But with the help of the Jewish revenue they accumulated comfortable fortunes. Thus the police had an interest in the Jews so long as the Pale was maintained and tolerated or prompted *pogroms* only when the *okhraru* [Tsarist secret police] judged them to be necessary. We shall see how this system of corruption gradually affected the whole Empire.

In addition to his inborn propensity for the accumulation of riches, the Jew living within the Pale was incited thereto by the degrading position of his impecunious co-religionary. The poorest peasant lived like a prince in comparison with the average Jew. A piece of herring, an onion, and a crust of bread formed the Jew's diet. Dirt, squalor, and privation were his destined portion. Besides, the *pogroms* affected rich and poor alike. Was it surprising that the Jew strove to escape from the Pale by fair means or foul, and that to him the lands east of the Dnieper [river] seemed like a Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey, where he might wax rich and live secure? But how could the moneyless Jew hope to reach it? The struggle to gain affluence was naturally intense. Only the craftiest and least scrupulous could hope to raise their heads above the seething mass of Jewish pauperdom.

Amongst this suffering multitude the devil of class-hatred raised a fearsome harvest. The teachings of Karl Marx, a German Jew, were here decocted in their quintessence and spread by migrants from the Pale into more favored lands — into the heart of Russia, into England and far America. Like many an noisome malady that has come to afflict mankind from the Near and Farther East, the worst political poisons exuded from the Pale.

The rich and the poor among the Jews were bound together by ties of religion and charity. The wealthier Israelites gave of their abundance to the less fortunate ones of their faith. But this bond was not a comprehensive one. Certain important elements repudiated it by severing all ties with Jewry. For apostasy was one of the manifold evils arising out of Jewish disabilities. The poorer Jew could also break open the door of his prison by passing stringent academic tests. Then he went into the cities, an isolated, needy adventurer, quickly losing his faith, dominated by thirst for vengeance, seeing in the most violent political creeds and methods an appeal to redress the wrongs of his people, and ready to implicate the bourgeois Jew and the Gentile in his feelings of class and political hatred.

Through the schools the Jew sought to satisfy his desire for freedom rather than a thirst for learning. University degrees gave certain rights and privileges, including the right to travel or reside anywhere in Russia. Every Jewish boy strove to enter a university. For this purpose he had to matriculate through a high school. The proportion of Jews admissible had to be limited, however, or they would have swamped the “gymnasia” within the Pale. Only the very cleverest Jewish boys could gain access to the State schools and eventually enter the university. And the proportion of Jewish undergraduates was also restricted. It represented more than double the ratio of the Jewish to the Gentile population, but this did not satisfy Jewish appetites. Handicapped, the Jews yet managed to exceed the norm at the close of their studies, because they were more persistent and could endure greater privations than the poorest Russian student. An outcry was raised when the Ministry of Education insisted on refusing further admittance to Jewish undergraduates until the proportions had been readjusted.

Attempts to safeguard the Russians from Jewish encroachment became more pronounced and desperate as the tide of Hebrew invasion rose higher, and — I may add — as outcasts from Jewry developed revolutionary tendencies. The Jews were slowly but surely pervading all the lucrative

professions: the Bar and medicine (they had almost monopolized them by the time the Revolution broke out), and to a lesser degree art and literature. They had small inclination for science or engineering. Commissions in the Army and Navy were barred to them. Commerce and industry could not appeal to the impecunious Jew. These lucrative branches were reserved for wealthy Hebrews, who, by payment of a certain Guild tax (amounting to about 100 pounds sterling per annum), could reside everywhere. In banking and industries the Jews became all-pervasive, as in the Press. They were confidants of Grand Dukes. The bureaucracy tried to restrain their irresistible sway by introducing senseless restrictions. For instance, a Jew could not be freely elected to boards of companies.

Numerous methods of evading the law of residence arose. Dentists' and chemists' [pharmacists'] assistants and certain artificers were granted partial exemptions. These callings were glutted with Jews. "Colleges" sprung up which did a profitable trade in "diplomas." The police readily winked at irregularities for a consideration. Petrograd was full of Jews who had no legal right of residence. They lived in suburban districts on payment of a "private tax" to the police, who watched over their interests paternally, and were disposed to molest only those Jews who had a right to reside there.

It becomes clear that the purpose for which the Pale and all the other anti-Jewish restrictions had been devised was mistaken and mischievous. It defeated itself. It led to the penetration of Russia by Hebrew elements of the most aggressive kind which had severed themselves from Jewry — had become pseudo-Jews — while it left the Jewish masses to suffer in congestion and misery. The purpose was one of self-preservation, yet it was misrepresented in the eyes of the world by the Jews plausibly enough, for motives that are easily comprehensible.

No instigation was necessary to provoke *pogroms.* They would have occurred oftener if the police had not interfered. The Little Russian [Ukrainian], Lithuanian or Polish peasants wrecked Jewish shops whenever Jewish "exploitation" assumed intensive forms. A similar phenomenon had been observed in Austria- Hungary (H. Wickham Steed, *The Hapsburg Monarchy),* and its recurrence in Russia since the Revolution puts an end to the fiction that the police alone were responsible. Indeed, the frequency of *pogroms* during 1917 was all the more remarkable because Revolutionary Russia was disposed to champion the Jews as a race that had been oppressed by the Old Regime.

Another point must be explained before I leave the Jewish question. When the Russian armies entered Poland at the beginning of the war many regiments from other parts of the Empire knew little or nothing about the Jews. The soldiers had a religious prejudice against them and also a certain contempt, because the Jews systematically evaded service in the ranks. Here they found enormous populations of Jews who were obsequious and omniscient. Jewish "factors" supplied them with anything for money, even drink. To ingratiate themselves with officers and men they would tell them — long anticipating official knowledge — of promotions and of impending transfers of units. As the Germans displayed by means of derisive placards hoisted over the trenches a similar knowledge of military secrets, the idea gains ground that the Jews were spying in the interests of Germany. "Telephone" wires discovered around Jewish houses confirmed this suspicion. It is interesting to note that the Jews had a habit of "wiring" their compounds in order to evade some of the Talmudic laws of ritual and other observances. This simple explanation accounts for many of the cruelties to which Jews were unjustly subjected. Let me add that to my knowledge Jewish soldiers of the right sort performed many gallant deeds — worthy of their remote ancestors, the Maccabeans.

APPENDIX D: THE JEWISH ROLE IN THE EARLY SOVIET REGIME

A striking feature of Mr. Wilton's examination of the tumultuous 1917-1919 period in Russia is his frank treatment of the critically important Jewish role in establishing the Bolshevik regime.

The following lists of persons in the Bolshevik Party and Soviet administration during this period, which Wilton compiled on the basis of official reports and original documents, underscore the crucial Jewish role in these bodies. These lists first appeared in the rare French edition of Wilton's book, published n Paris in 1921 under the title *Les Demiers Jours des Romanoffs.* They did not appear in either the American or British editions of *The Last Days of the Romanovs* published in 1920.

"I have done all in my power to act as an impartial chronicler," Wilton wrote in his foreword to *Les Demiers Jours des Romanoffs.* "In order not to leave myself open to any accusation of prejudice, I am giving the list of the members of the [Bolshevik Party's] Central Committee, of the Extraordinary Commission *[Cheka* or secret police], and of the Council of Commissars functioning at the time of the assassination of the Imperial family.

"The 62 members of the [Central] Committee were composed of five Russians, one Ukrainian, six Letts [Latvians], two Germans, one Czech, two Armenians, three Georgians, one Karaim [Karaite] (a Jewish sect), and 41 Jews.

'The Extraordinary Commission *[Cheka* or *Vecheka]* of Moscow was composed of 36 members, including one German, one Pole, one Armenian, two Russians, eight Latvians, and 23 Jews.

"The Council of the People's Commissars [the Soviet government] numbered two Armenians, three Russians, and 17 Jews.

"According to data furnished by the Soviet press, out of 556 important functionaries of the Bolshevik state, including the above-mentioned, in 1918-1919 there were: 17 Russians, two Ukrainians, eleven Armenians, 35 Letts [Latvians], 15 Germans, one Hungarian, ten Georgians, three Poles, three Finns, one Czech, one Karaim, and 457 Jews."

"If the reader is astonished to find the Jewish hand everywhere in the affair of the assassination of the Russian Imperial family, he must bear in

mind the formidable numerical preponderance of Jews in the Soviet administration," Wilton went on to write.

Effective governmental power, Wilton continued (on pages 136-138 of the same edition) is in the Central Committee of the Bolshevik party. In 1918, he reported, this body had twelve members, of whom nine were of Jewish origin, and three were of Russian ancestry. The nine Jews were: Bronstein (Trotsky), Apfelbaum (Zinoviev), Lurie (Larine), Uritsky, Volodarski, Rosenfeld (Kamenev), Smidovich, Sverdlov (Yankel), and Nakhamkes (Steklov). The three Russians were: Ulyanov (Lenin), Krylenko, and Lunacharsky.

"The other Russian Socialist parties are similar in composition," Wilton went on. "Their Central Committees are made up as follows:"

— Mensheviks (Social Democrats): Eleven members, all of whom are Jewish.

— Communists of the People: Six members, of whom five are Jews and one is a Russian.

— Social Revolutionaries (Right Wing): Fifteen members, of whom 13 are Jews and two are Russians (Kerenski, who may be of Jewish origin, and Tchaikovski).

— Social Revolutionaries (Left Wing): Twelve members, of whom ten are Jews and two are Russians.

— Committee of the Anarchists of Moscow: Five members, of whom four are Jews and one is a Russian.

— Polish Communist Party: Twelve members, all of whom are Jews, including Sobelson (Radek), Krokhenal (Zagon- ski), and Schwartz (Goltz).

"These parties," commented Wilton, "in appearance opposed to the Bolsheviks, play the Bolsheviks' game on the sly, more or less, by preventing the Russians from pulling themselves together. Out of 61 individuals at the head of these parties, there are six Russians and 55 Jews. No matter what may be the name adopted, a revolutionary government will be Jewish."

[Although the Bolsheviks permitted these leftist political groups to operate for a time under close supervision and narrow limits, even these pitiful remnants of organized opposition were thoroughly eliminated by the end of the 1921.]

The Soviet government, or "Council of People's Commissars' (also known as the "Sovnarkom") was made up of the following, Wilton

reported:

Peoples Commissariat

(Ministry')	*Name*	*Nationality*
Chairman	V. I. Ulyanov (Lenin)	Russian
Foreign Affairs	G. V. Chicherin	Russian
Nationalities	J. Dzhugashvili [Stalin]	Georgian
Agriculture	Protian	Armenian
Economic Council	Lourie (Larin)	Jew
Food Supply Army and Navy	A. G. Schlikhter	Jew
[Military]	L.D. Bronstein (Trotski)	Jew
State Control	K. I. Lander	Jew
State Lands	Kaufmann	Jew
Works [Labor]	V. Schmidt	Jew
Social Relief	E. Lilina (Knigissen)	Jew
Education	A. Lunacharsky	Russian
Religion	Spitzberg	Jew
Interior	Apfelbaum [Radomyslski]	
	(Zinoviev)	Jew
Hygiene	Anvelt	Jew
Finance	I. E. Gukovs [and G. Sokolnikov]	Jew
Press	Voldarski [Goldstein]	Jew
Elections	M. S. Uritsky	Jew
Justice	I. Z. Shteinberg	Jew
Refugees	Fenigstein	Jew
Refugees	Savitch (Assistant)	Jew
Refugees	Zaslovski (Assistant)	Jew

Out of these 22 “Sovnarkom” members, Wilton summed up, there were three Russians, one Georgian, one Armenian, and 17 Jews.

The Central Executive Committee, Wilton continues, was made up of the following members:

Y. M. Sverdlov [Solomon] (Chairman) Jew
Avanesov (Secretary) Armenian
Bruno Latvian
Breslau Latvian [?]
Babtchinski . Jew
N. I. Bukharin Russian
Weinberg Jew
Gailiss Jew
Ganzberg [Ganzburg] Jew
Danichevski Jew
Starck German
Sachs Jew
Scheinmann Jew
Erdling Jew
Landauer Jew
Linder Jew
Wolach Czech
S. Dimanshtein Jew
Encukidze Georgian
Ermann Jew
A. A. Ioffe Jew
Karkhline Jew
Knigissen Jew
Rosenfeld (Kamenev) Jew
Apfelbaum (Zinoviev) Jew
N. Krylenko Russian
Krassikov Jew
Kaprik Jew
Kaoul Latvian
Ulyanov (Lenin) Russian
Latsis Jew
Lander Jew

Lunacharsky Russian
Peterson Latvian
Peters Latvian
Roudzoutas Jew
Rosine Jew
Smidovitch Jew
Stoutchka Latvian
Nakhamkes (Steklov) Jew
Sosnovski Jew
Skrytnik Jew
L. Bronstein (Trotsky) Jew
Teodorovitch Jew [?]
Terian Armenian
Uritsky Jew
Telechkine Russian
Feldmann Jew
Frumkin Jew
Souriupa Ukrainian
Tchavtchevadze Georgian
Scheikmann Jew
Rosental Jew
Achkinazi Imereti an [?]
Karakhane Karaim [Karaite]
Rose Jew
Sobelson (Radek) Jew
Schlichter Jew
Schikolini Jew
Chklianski Jew
Levine (Pravdine) Jew

Thus, concluded Wilton, out of 61 members, five were Russians, six were Latvians, one was a German, two were Armenians, one was a Czech, one was an Imeretian, two were Georgians, one was a Karaim, one was a Ukrainian, and 41 were Jews.

The Extraordinary Commission of Moscow *(Cheka)* — the Soviet secret police and predecessor of the GPU, the NKVD and the KGB — was made up of the following:

F. Dzerzhinsky (Chairman) Pole
Y. Peters (Deputy Chairman) Latvian
Chklovski Jew
Kheifiss Jew
Zeistine Jew
Razmirovitch Jew
Kronberg Jew
Khaikina Jew
Karlson Latvian
Schaumann Latvian
Leontovitch Jew
Jacob Goldine Jew
Galperstein Jew
Kniggisen Jew
Katzis Latvian
Schillenkuss Jew
Janson Latvian
Rivkine Jew
Antonof Russian
Del a fab re Jew
Tsitkine Jew
Roskirovitch Jew
G. Sverdlov (Brother of president of the Central Executive Committee) Jew
Biesenski Jew
J. Blumkin (Count Mirbach's assassin) Jew
Alexandrovitch (Blumkin's accomplice) Russian
I. Model Jew
Routenberg Jew
Pines Jew
Sachs Jew
Daybol Latvian
Saissoune Armenian
Deylkenen Latvian
Liebert Jew
Vogel German
Zakiss Latvian

Of these 36 *Cheka* officials, one was a Pole, one a German, one an Armenian, two were Russians, eight were Latvians, and 23 were Jews.

"Accordingly," Wilton sums up, "there is no reason to be surprised at the preponderant role of Jews in the assassination of the Imperial family. It is rather the opposite that would have been surprising."